

# THE SAINTS DAILY EXERCISE.

*A Treatise*  
Unfolding the whole dutie  
of PRAYER.  
*Delivered*

In five Sermons vpon 1 Thess. 5. 17.

*By the late faithfull and worthy  
Minister of Iesu Christ,*

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The thi d Edition, corrected.

*The effectuall fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth  
much. James. 5. 16.  
If I regard iniury in my heart, the Lord will not hear  
my prayer. Psal. 66. 18.*

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## TO THE READER.

Courteous Reader.

**D**O discourse largely of the necessity and vse of this peece of spirituall armour, after so many learned and vsefull Treatises, vpon this subject, may seeme superfluous, especially considering that there is much spoken to this purpose, for thy satisfaction, in the ensuing Treatise; wherein, besides the vn-folding of the nature of this dutie, (which is the Saints dailie exercise) and strong enforcement to it, there is an endeavour to giue satisfaction in the most incident cases, want of clearing whereof is vsually an hindrance to the chearefull, and ready performance thereof. In all which, what hath beene done by this Reverend and worthy man, we had rather shoulde appeare in the Treatise it selfe, to thy indifferent iudgement, then to bee much in setting downe our owne opinion. This we doubt not of, that, by reason of the Spirituall, and convincing manner of handling this Argument, it will winne acceptance with many, especially considering, that it is of that nature, wherein, though much haue beene spoken, yet much more may be said with good relish to those that haue anie spirituall sense: for it is the most spirituall action, wherein wee haue nearer communion with God, then in anie other holie performance, and whereby it

To the Reader.

pleaseth God to conveigh all good to vs, to the performance whereof Christians finde most backwardnesse, and indispositione, and from thence most deiection of spirit; which also in these times, is most necessarie, wherein, vnlesse we fetch helpe from heaven, this way, wee see the Church and Cause of God like to be trampled vnder feete. Onelie, remember, that we let these Sermons passe forth as they were delivered by himselfe, in publicke, without taking that libertie of adding or detracting, which, perhaps, some would haue thought meete: for wee thought it best that his owne meaning should be expressed in his owne words and manner, especially considering there is little which perhaps may seeme superfluous to some, but may, by Gods blessing, be vsefull to others. It would be a good prevention of many inconveniences, in this kinde, if able men would bee perswaded to publish their owne works in their life time, yet wee thinke it a good service to the Church, when that defect is supplyed by giving some life to those things, which otherwise would haue died of themselues. The blessing of these labours of his we commend unto God, & the benefit of them unto thee, resting

Thine in our Lord Iesus Christ,

RICHARD SIBBS.

JOHN DAVENPORT.



# THE SAINTS DAILY EXERCISE.

## THE FIRST SERMON.

1. THESS. 5. 17.

*Pray continually.*

HE Apostle here, in the latter end of this Epistle, heapes vp many precepts together, and therefore we shall not neede to seeke out the dependance of these words from those that go before, or those that follow after. *Reioyce evermore (faith he) Pray continually, In all things give thanks:*

*thankes: for this is the will of God in Christ Iesus to you wards.*

Wee are now fallen vpon this Text, where this duty of prayer is commended to vs, and it is a command from G o d himselfe delivered shortly, as lawes are wont to be, without any great premises and reasons, and indeede, having therefore the more authority in it.

*Pray Continually.*

3. Things con-  
siderable, for  
opening of the  
words.

I N the handling of which, we will doe these three things.

First, we will shew you what *prayer is.*

Secondly, why the L O R D requires this at our hands; for a man might object, the L O R D knowes my wants well enough, he knowes my minde, and how I am affected? I, but yet the L O R D will haue vs to *pray*, and to aske before he will bestow it vpon vs.

And lastly, what it is to *pray continually.*

1. What prayer  
is.  
1. In generall.

For the first. If we would define *prayer* in generall to you, I would giue you no more but this description of it. *It is an expression of the minde to the Lord:* sometimes by words, sometimes without words, but yet there must be an *expression*, and some opening of the will to him. This is the generall.

2. In speciall.

But now to know what a right *prayer* is, what such a *prayer* is, as *God accepts*; you must haue an other definition which must haue more ingredients into it, and so, *prayer is*, nothing else but *an expression, or offering of those holy, and good dispositions*

tions to God, that arise from the spirit, or the rege-  
nerate part, in the name of Iesu Christ. Where you  
are to obserue this; That the *prayers*, that wee  
make, are divided into one of these two sorts.

First, some are such *prayers* as are the expre-  
sions of our owne spirits, the voice of our owne  
spirits, and there is nothing but flesh in them; such  
prayers as any naturall man may make to  
the L O R D. And these the L O R D regards not, he  
knowes not the meaning of them, that is, hee  
doth not accept them.

Secondly, there are prayers that are the voice  
of G o d s ownc Spirit, that is, such as arise from  
the regenerate part which is within vs, which is  
quickened and enlarged to pray from the imme-  
diate helpe of the *holy Ghost*; these prayers are  
onely accepted: and of these it is said, *he knowes  
the meaning of the Spirit*: that is, hee so knowes  
it, and sees it, that also he accepts it. Therefore  
you shall see in *Hosea 7. 14.* when they prayed,  
and prayed earnestly, yea they set a day apart  
for prayer, they called a solemne Assembly, and  
kept a fast, yet, saith the L O R D plainly, *ye did not  
call upon me when you howled upon your beds*; for,  
(saith he) *you assembled your selues for corne, and for  
wine*, which any naturall man may doe: And  
therefore, (saith he) it is but a *howling*: It is the  
voice of beasts to seeke for wine, and oyle, and  
corne, but hee saith plainly, *you called not upon  
me*; when notwithstanding, they spent a whole  
day in prayer. But the meaning is, that the L O R D  
regards this as no prayer at all.

Division of  
prayers into  
two sorts.

I  
Such as come  
from our owne  
spirits.

Note.

2  
Such as come  
from Gods  
spirit.

Rom. 8. 27.

Hosea 7. 14.

Prayers of  
wicked men  
howlings.

The termes of  
the description  
opened.

Q. Why hee  
seth the word  
(dispositions)  
rather then de-  
sires.

When the de-  
sires and dis-  
positions of  
men are good,

*Ques.*

*Ans.*

That temporall  
things may be  
desired in a  
carnall man-  
ner, and carnal  
things in a spi-  
rituall manner  
and how.

And therefore to open a little this description vnto you; for it is one maine businesse that we haue to doe, in the handling of this Text, to describe to you the meaning of this precept, what the nature of *prayer* is, that you may know what kinde of *prayer* it is, that prevalest with God. I say, *it is an expression of holy and good dispositions*. I vle that ex pression, rather of *dispositions* then *desires*, because there is some part of *prayer* that stands in thanksgiving, when you desire nothing at Gods hands, but giue thanks for that you haue received; marke first, that they must be *holy*, and *good*, the desires and dispositions must be good: for that is a rule, all the affections and desires are good, or evill, according as their objects are; those that are fixed vpon good things, are good desires.

You will say then, what are the good things that make the desires and dispositions of the heart good?

They are temporall things, and spirituall both. A man may pray for temporall things in a spirituall manner, and the desire may be good; And againe, hee may pray for spirituall things in a carnall manner, and the desire may bee naught. Therefore that must be observed withall, that it is not simply the object, but there is a certaine manner of desiring too. For example, if a man pray for temporal things, for outward comforts, such things as belong to the present estate of his body here; If he pray for them with these conditions, that he may haue that which is convenient

ent for him, he prayes for such a measure as God sees to be meet, as Pro. 31. *Feed me with convenient food for me;* this prayer is good. But (*if any man will be rich, as 1 T.m.6.*) it is an inordinate desire, when men will haue excesse of these outward things, and more then is fit for them. And againe, if you desire that which is *convenient,* and *spend it upon your lusts;* if you desire health, and long life, that you may liue more pleasantly; if you desire wealth, that you may liue more deliciously, and not simply that which the creature may desire, and to the end that you may be the more enabled to serue the Lord in these things, your desire is not good. So I say, first it must be for that which is *convenient;* secondly, you must not *spend it upon your lusts,* but in God's service.

And lastly, we must pray for them in a right method, *First the Kingdome of God, and then other things,* that is, set a price on them, as you ought, not too high a price, but value them aright. We should so pray for outward things, as our prayers may bee spirituall. On the other side, a man may pray for spirituall things in a carnall manner, as for temporall things in a spirituall manner. A naturall man may pray earnestly for faith, and for grace, and repentance, not out of any beautie that he sees in them, not out of any taste and relish that he hath of them, but because hee thinkes them a bridge to leade him to heaven, and that hee cannot come thither without them: when hee consideris in his heart that hee cannot be saved without these things, I say, then he may

Pro. 31.

1 Tim. 6. 9.

When the desire of outward things is good.

How a carnall man may pray for grace.

SPIRA his  
case.

These desires  
must bee offe-  
red to God,

Arising from  
the spirit or re-  
generate part.

Expressions of  
prayer in the  
Scriptures.

1 Sam. 1.15.

Acts 13. 2.

desire them, and desire them earnestly. It was the case of *Francis Spira*, who cryed so earnestly for grace, that hee might haue but a drop of it, because he could not be saved without it, he giues the reasoun himselfe; hee said withall, he saw no excellencie in it, he desired it not for it selfe; and therefore hee thought his prayers should not be heard. Thus you see that prayer is an *expression of holy and good desires*, and it is an offering them vp to the Lord.

I will not stand vpon that (you are well enough instructed in it) that whatsoever petition is made to the creature, it is not a prayer, it must onely be offered vp to the L o r d.

Then I adde, it is such as must arise from the regenerate part, that is, looke how much there is of the regenerate part in a prayer, looke how much the *holy Spirit* hath to doe in it, looke how much comes from that which is called the *inward man*, so farre it is sanctified, so farre that prayer is accepted, and no further. But, that we may open this a little more fully, we will shew you it by some other expressions of prayer, that wee finde in the Scriptures.

It is called a *lifting up of the heart to God*, a *poun-  
ring forth of the soule to the Lord*, 1 Sam. 1.15. *A scr-  
ving of him in spirit*, so *Paul* calleth it. Now if we open these phrases to you a little, you shall know more fully wherein the nature of right praying to G o d consists. That phrase the Apostle vseth, *whom I serue in my spirit* (it is the same word in the originall that is vsed for fasting and prayer)

prayer) Now what is that to pray to G o d in the spirit? for we may say, a man cannot make a prayer, but there is an act of his minde goes to it, and every man what service soever he performes his spirit must needes haue a hand in it, so that it cannot be performed without the minde.

I take this to be the meaning of it, the Apostle his scope, is to distinguish the true and holy ser-vices of G o d from those that are but shadowes, and counterfeit, that are but the body and car-casse of right service. Therefore, when he saith, *I serue the Lord in my spirit, or, I pray in the spirit;* the meaning is this, when the prayer of a man is not onely that which the vnderstanding di-cates to him, but when the whole soule, the will and affections goe together with his petition, and whatsoever the petition is, a mans heart is af-fected accordingly. As, for example, if a man come to confess his sinnes, and yet sleights them inwardly in his heart; if a man pray for reconci-liation with G o d, and yet haue no longing and fighing in his heart after it, if hee earnestly aske grace, and the mortification of sinfull lusts, when the heart doth not inwardly seeke it, now hee prayes not in the spirit. To pray in the spirit is as that in *1oh.4.24. He will be worshipped in spirit and in truth.* The meaning is, so to pray, that the heart goe together with our petition; also, this is the meaning of that when a man powreth forth his soule before the L O R D. So *Hannah saith of her selfe; I am a woman troubled, &c. And powre out my soule before the Lord.* That is, when a man delivers

To serue God  
in the spirit  
what.

*John 4.24.*

To powre out  
the soule to  
God,what.

AUSTIN.

Simile.

Note.

to G o d that which the vnderstanding and mind hath devised; (for prayer is not a worke of wit, or of memorie) but when a man powreth forth his whole soule (that is) his will, and affections, when they goe together, when there is no reservation in his minde; but when all within him is opened and explicate, and exposed to the view of the L o r d ; not as *Austin* saith of himselfe, when he came to pray for the mortifying of his lusts, saith hee, *I had a secret inward desire that it should not be done.* Therefore when the *soule is powred forth*, the meaning is, that all be opened to him; so that when a man will make an acceptable prayer, he must make this accompt, he must then call in all his thoughts and affections, and recollect them together as the lines in the center, or as the Sunne beames in a burning glasse, and that makes prayer to be hot and fervent; whereas otherwise it is but a cold and dissipated thing, that hath no strength or efficacie in it.

Now withall, this you must know, that when wee say the whole soule must goe together with the petition, the meaning is, that not onely the will, and affections be employed, (for in a naturall man, in his desire of health, when he is sick, or wanteth assistance and guidance in difficult cases, not onely the vnderstanding, but the will and affections are busie enough, it is likely) and therefore we addeth further, that that which is called the spirit, which is diffused in the whole soule that that be set on worke in the performance of this holy dutie to the L o r d , whensoeuer wee seeke to him in prayer.

For

For this you know, that there are two things in a regenerate man, ( for that you must take for granted by the way, that no naturall man is able to make a prayer acceptable to God, seeing there is no spirit in him, but in the regenerate man ) there is, I say, flesh and spirit: now when we come to powre forth our heart to the Lord, that which lyes vppermost will be ready to be powred forth first; and that which is spirituall, it may be, lyes in the bottome, and that is kept in, and so a man may make a carnall prayer, though he be a holy man; that is, when the flesh hath gotten the vpper hand, as in some fits it may; when the mind is filled with worldly sorrow and worldly joycing, and worldly desires, and these would be exprefed to the Lord; it is a prayer that the Lord regards not, though the man bee holy, from whence it comes: but right prayer is this; when the regenerate part is acted and stirred vp, and the flesh that hinders, must be removed. For you know this, that wherefoever there is a regenerate part in any man, there is a great aptnesse in that to call vpon God; and it cannot be disjoyned from it, but that is not alwayes in act. As we see a fountaine, it hath alwayes an aptnes to powre forth water, it is ready to breake into a current, but if it be stopped with stones and mud, and other impediments, it cannot breake out, so he that is a regenerate man, that hath a holy part in him, there is an aptnesse to prayer. Which is that which our Saviour saith, Mat. 26.41. *The spirit is willing, that is, there is always a willingness*

Two things in  
a man regene-  
rate.  
No naturall  
man can make  
an acceptable  
prayer.

A holy man  
may make a  
carnall prayer.

Right prayer  
what.

Simile.

An aptnesse in  
the regenerate  
part to prayer,  
Mat. 26. 41.

How the spirit  
helpes our in-  
firmities.  
Rom 8.27.  
*Simile.*

nesse that followes the spirit, or the regenerate part in a holy man, but, saith he, *The flesh is backward*, that is, stops this fountaine, and therefore *Rom. 8.27.* *The spirit is said there to helpe our infir-*  
*mities, and to make our requests for vs;* that is, even as a man remoues stones from a fountaine with his hands, and when he hath done that, it breakes out into a current, so the *holy Ghost* remoues this flesh, that stops vp the current, the spirit takes away those carnall impediments that are in vs: and not onely so, but stirreth vp the regenerate part; and when that is done, we are able to make a spirituall prayer to *God in Christ Iesus;* So that is the thing, that you are now to obserue, that the spirit must helpe our infirmities, when wee come to call vpon *God,* and our prayers be so farre acceptable as they be the fruits of the regenerate part; now we want but one thing to adde in the definition.

Offered vp in  
the name of  
Iesus Christ.

*2 Chron. 26.*

*They are such prayers as are offered to God in the  
name of Iesus Christ.*

This is a thing that you all know, that those prayers that are not offered vp in *Christ,* are not acceptable, because the person is not regarded. It was the sinne of *Yizzah* in *2 Chron. 26.* hee would goe to the Temple himselfe being a King on the throne, and he would offer incencie without a Priest. We doe the very selfe-same thing whensoever we go to offer vp any prayer to *God* without *Christ Iesus;* In the olde law men might bring their sacrifices, but still the Priest must offer them; so must we here; and the reason is gi-  
ven,

ven, Rev. 8. because the prayers that come from vs favour of the flesh, from which they come, and the *Angel* of the Covenant *mingleth much incense with them*, and makes them sweet and acceptable to G o d, *with much incense*, that is, as the flesh is more, so there needes more incense, that they may be made acceptable to G o d the Father. So that we haue indeed a double intercessour; one is, *the spirit that helps our infirmities*, that helps vs to make our petitions, that quickens, and enlargeth our hearts to prayer: The other is the intercessour to make them acceptable to G o d, that he may receiue them, and not refuse and reject them. So much shall serue for the first thing, to shew you what the duty is, what a right, true, and acceptable prayer is.

Now for the second, *why we must pray*, (for that objection a man may make) the L o r d knowes minde well enough, and what needes such an expression of it by prayer? The reasons briefly why the L o r d will haue vs to pray, are taken;

Partly from himselfe.

And partly from vs.

1. From himselfe, though he be willing to bestow mercies vpon vs, yet he will haue vs ask his leaue before he doth it. As, you know, fathers do with their children, though they intend to bestow such things vpon them, as are needfull, yet they will haue their children to ask them; & as it is a common thing among men, though they be willing a man should passe through their ground yet they will haue leaue asked, because by that meanes

Revel. 8.  
Why wee must  
offer our pray-  
ers in Christ's  
name.

2  
Why the Lord  
will haue vs to  
pray, seeing he  
knowes our  
wants.

I  
In respect of  
himselfe.  
*Simile.*

*Simile.*

1. To acknowledge his property in his gifts

*Simile.*

meanes the property is acknowledged, otherwise it would be taken as a common high way, so the L O R D will haue his servants come and aske, that they may acknowledge the property hee hath in those gifts hee bestowes vpon them : Indeed, otherwise we would forget in what tenure we hold these blessings wee enjoy, and what service wee owe to the L O R D , as you know there is an homage due to the L O R D , that the L O R D might be acknowledged, so the L O R D will haue this dutie of prayer performed, that we may acknowledge him, that we hold all of him, and that we might remember the service that we ought to doe him, to rise and goe at his command, that is, to doe his service, which we would be ready to forget, if we were not accustomed to the duty of calling on him.

2

To honour him.

*Simile.*

Glory what.

Likewise he will haue it done for his honours sake, he will haue men call upon him, that they may learne to reverence him, and likewise that others might be stirred vp to reverence him, and to honour him, and to feare him. The servants of a Prince doing honour and reverence to their Lord, they stirre vp those that are lookers on: And as the Schoolemen say of glory, Glory is properly this, not when a man hath an excellencie in him, ( for that hee may haue, and yet be without glorie ) but glorie is an ostentation, a shewing out of that excellencie. It is the phrase that is vsed in the Sacrament ; you shall celebrate the Sacrament that you may *shew forth the Lords death*; so the L O R D will haue vs come & call vpon

on his name to shew forth the duty of prayer, and that we may shew forth his glory. This is for the L O R D himselfe.

Now for our selues, we are to doe it, partly, that the graces of his Spirit may be increased in vs : for prayer exerciseth our graces, every grace is exercised in prayer , and they being exercised are increased. See an excellent place for this in *Iude 20.* *That you may edifie your selues in the holy faith praying in the holy Ghost ;* as if he should say, the way to edifie your selues, and build vp your selues, is to pray in the *holy Ghost*; that is, spirituall prayer, made through the power, and assistance, and strength of the *holy Ghost*: Every such prayer builds vs vp, it increaseth every grace in vs, faith, and repentance, and loue, and obedience, and feare, all are increased by prayer.

Partly, because they are exercised and set on worke in prayer ; for the very exercise increaseth them.

And partly also, because prayer brings vs to Communion with G o d. Now, if good company increase grace, how much more will Communion with the L O R D himselfe quicken and increase it.

Moreover, this duty is required, that we may be acquainted with G o d; for there is a strangenes betweene the L O R D and vs, when we doe not call vpon his name. It is the command which you shall finde in *Job. 22. 21.* *Acquaint thy selfe with the Lord, that thou maist haue peace with him, and thou shalt haue prosperity.* Now, you know how acquaintance

2. In respect of  
our selues.

I

That the gra-  
ces in vs may  
be increased,

*Iude 20.*

2

To exercise  
grace.

3

To bring vs to  
communion  
with God.

4

To avoide  
strangenesse  
to God.

*Job. 22. 21.*

*Simile.*

How acquaintance is gotten  
and lost.

quaintance growes amongst men ; it is by conuersing together, by speaking one to another. On the other fide, we say, when that is broken off, when they salute not, when they speak not together, a strangenesse growes; so it is in this : when we come to the L O R D , and are frequent, and fervent in this duty of calling vpon him, we grow acquainted with him, and without it wee grow strangers, and the L O R D dwells afarre off, we are not able to behold him, except we be accustomed to it, and the more wee come into his presence, the more wee are acquainted with him. Therefore that is another reason why we should vse this, that we may get acquaintance with the L O R D .

<sup>5</sup>  
To teach vs  
thankfulnessc.

Likewise, that we may learne to be thankefull to him for those mercies we haue received from him; for, if G o d should bestow mercies vpon vs vnasked, we would forget them, his hand would not be acknowledged in them ; and wee would not see his providence in disposing those blessings that we doe enjoy, but when wee come to aske every thing before him, we are then readie to see his hand more, and to prize it more, and we are disposed to more thankefulness. So that it is a sure rule commonly, what we winne with prayer, that wee ware with thankefulness, and that which we get without prayer, wee spend, and vse without any lifting vp of the heart to G o d , in praising him, and acknowledging his hand, in bestowing it vpon vs; so you see what this duty is. And,

*Note.*

What we get  
without pray-  
er is spent vn-  
thankfully.

Secondly,

Secondly, why the L o R D will haue this duty performed.

Now, thirdly, (in a word) what is it to *pray continually*? The word in the originall signifieth, such a performance of this duty, that you doe not cease to doe it, at such times as G o d requires it at your hands. Compare this with that in the second Epistle to *Timothy*, 1. 3. The Apostle saith there, that hee hath him in *continual remembrance*, *praying for him night and day*, where the same word is vsed that is here. Now we cannot thinke that the Apostle had *Timothy* in continual remembrance, that hee was never out of his thought, but the meaning is, when he did call vpon G o d, from day to day, hee still remembred him. So that to *pray continually*, is to pray very much, to pray at those times when G o d requires vs to pray. For it is the definition that Philosophers giue of idlenes, a man is then said to be idle, when hee doth not that which hee ought, in the time when it is requiren of him. He is an idle man that workes not, when hee ought to worke; so hee is said not to pray continually, that prayes not when he ought to pray. So that I conceiuie this to be the meaning of the Apostle, *Resoyce evermore*, (faith hec) but when hee comes to this exhortation of prayer, hee contents not himselfe to say pray very often, but pray continually, as wee vse to expresse our selues when wee would haue a thing frequently done, wee say, see that you be always doing of this. So the Apostles scope is

3. What it is to  
pray conti-  
nually.

Aπιαλειτ-  
τως.

2 Tim. 1.3.

Idleness, what

to

*Obs.*

A constant course of prayer, at least twice a day is our duty.

*Quest.**Answe.*

The grounds of it.

1. From the text.

2. From examples.

Dan. 6. 3.

3. From reasons.

1. That God might be worshipped.

to shew that it should bee exceeding often, and that it should bee very much done. Hence wee gather this by the way, that wee are bound to keepe our constant course of calling vpon G o d, at the least twice a day, whatsoever wee doe more.

But you will say, what ground haue you for that, why doe you instance in that twice a day?

The ground of it is this, when the Apostle bids vs *pray continually*, doe it exceeding much, doe it very often, the least we can doe it is twice a day, we may doe it oftner; but that, I say, is the least. When wee haue such a command as this, when we haue such a precept as this, *pray continually*; and this rule illustrated by such examples as we haue in the Scriptures, why is it recorded, if it be not true of every example in that kinde that is said of the generall example, i *Cor. 10. They are written for our learning?* when it is said that *David* prayed oft, and *Daniel* expresly in *Dan. 6. 3.* *He prayed three times a day*, that was his constant course, I say, we may think we are bound to do it at the least twice a day. Consider a little the reason of it why we are bound to doe it; In the *Temple*, you know, the L o r d was worshipped twise a day, there was *the morning, and the evening sacrifice*. What was the ground of that commandement? there was no reason of it, but that the L o r d might be worshipped, & that was the time that he would haue it done twice a day, morning and evening: but besides that, it was not onely that

that the L O R D might be worshipped, (wherin we should follow that example of worshipping him morning and evening.) But likewise our occasions are such, that that is the least we can doe to call vpon him constantly morning and evening: for there is no day but wee vse many blessings, and we take many of his creatures. Now we may not take any of them without his leauie; so that thou art bound to aske for them before thou take them, and pray for a blessing vpon them, or else thou hast no right to them, thou hast no lawfull vse of them; that place is plaine, *1 Tim. 4.* Every creature of God is good, and ought not to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving; for it is sanctified by prayer. So that, if you take common blessings every day, and doe not seeke them at the L O R D s hands before you take them, they are not sanctified vnto you, you haue not a lawfull vse of them, you haue no right vnto them.

Besides, my Beloved, it is that which the L O R D commands in every thing, *Make your requests knowne in every thing,* that is, whensoever you need any thing, make your requests knowne; so in every thing give thankes. And therefore the least we can doe when we haue received, and doe need so many mercies, is to giue thankes, and to seeke to him so often, from day to day.

Moreover, doe not our hearts need it, are they not ready to goe out of order, are they not ready to contract hardnessse, are they not ready to goe from the L O R D , and to be hardened from G O D s fereare? Therefore this duty is needfull, in that regard,

2  
That we may use blessings aright.

*1 Tim. 4.*

3  
From Gods command,

4  
To keepe our hearts in order

gard, to compose them, and bring them backe againe in order.

<sup>5</sup>  
To get forgiue-  
nesse of daily  
sinnes.

Moreover, doe not the sianes we commit dailly, put a necessity vpon vs, of doing this, that they may be forgiven, and done away, and that we may be reconciled to *God* againe? Therefore doe not thinke that it is an arbitrary thing to call vpon *God* twice a day, because there is no particular expresse command; for if you consider these places that I haue named, and the reasons, wee shall see there is a necessitie lyes vpon vs to doe it. So much shall serue forthat, I come now to make some vse of this that hath beene delivred.

*Vse.* I.  
shewing the  
miserie wicked  
men, in that  
they cannot  
pray.

First, in that such prayers, as the *Lord* accepts, are an expression of holy desires, such desires as rise from the regenerate part of a man: Hence then we see that all naturall men are in a miserable condition, when times of extremity come, & when the day of death comes, when there is no helpe in the world, but seeking to the *Lord*, when all the creatures forsake them, and are not able to helpe them; and there is no way to goe to the *Lord* but by prayer; if praier be an effect, and fruit of the regenerate part of a man, a carnall man is not able to helpe himselfe, he is in a miserable condition. Therefore let men consider this that put all off to times of extremity. Put the case, thou hast warning enough, at such a time; put the case thou hast the vse of thy vnderstanding, yet thou art not able to doe any good without this: for, if there be not grace in the heart, thou art not

*Note.*

not able to make a spirituall prayer to the L o r d ,  
that the L o r d accepts. Therefore take heede of  
deferring, and putting off; labour to be rege-  
nerate, to haue your hearts renewed, while you  
haue time, and if thou be not able to call vpon  
G o d in the time of health, how wilt thou doe it  
when thy wits, and thy spirit are spent, and lost,  
and in the times of sicknesse and extreamitie?  
Therefore let that be considered, which we doe  
but touch by the way briefly.

Secondly, if the L o r d command this, if it  
be the command of G o d , pray continually: Then  
take heede of neglecting this duty, rather be ex-  
horted to be frequent, and fervent in it, to continue  
therein, and watch thereto with all perseverance.  
It is a common fault amongst vs, either we are  
ready to omit it; or to come to it vnwillingly, or  
else we performe it in a carelessse, and negligent  
manner, not considering, what a command lyeth  
vpon the sons of men to performe it constantly,  
and conscientially. I beseech you consider this,  
that it is a priviledge purchased by the blood of  
Iesus Christ, Christ dyed for this end, it cost him  
the shedding of his blood, That we through him,  
might haue entrance to the throne of grace; and will  
you let such a priviledge as this lie still? If you  
doe so farre as is in you, you cause his blood to  
be shed in vaine: for, if you neglect the priviledges  
gotten by that blood, so far you neglect the  
blood, that procured them; but to neglect this  
duty, is to neglect that. Besides, if we aske you  
the reason, why you abstain from other sins, why

Vse.2.

Eph.6.

Motives to  
prayer.

I  
Christ dyed for  
this end.

2  
It is Gods  
command.

you steale not, why you commit not adultery, and murther; The reason that you giue, is, because the L O R D hath commanded you. Hath not the L O R D commanded you to pray constantly, at all times? If you make conscience of one commandement, why doe you not of an other?

3  
The example  
of Saints.  
Dan. 6.

Consider Daniel in this case, in the 6. of Daniel, he would not omit a constant course of prayer, he did it three times a day, and that was his ordinary custome. If he would not omit it to spare his life, if he would not omit it in such a case of danger as that, why will you omit it for busynesse, for a little advantage, for a little gaine, for a little wealth or pelfe, or pompe, or pleasure, or whatsoeuer may draw you from that duty?

4  
The equity of  
it.

Eph 2,

Doe but consider what an vnreasonable, and what an vnequall thing it is, that when the L O R D giues vs meate and drinke, and cloathes, from day to day, when he giues vs sleepe every night, when he provides for vs such comforts, as wee haue neede of, as there is not the least creature that doth vs any service, but as farre as he fels it on worke to doe that service, for vs to forget him, and not to giue him thankes, and not to aske these things at his hands, not to seeke vnto him, but to live as *without God in the world*, as we doe, when we neglect this duty: I say, it is a profession of living without G o d in the world, we are strangers to him, it is open rebellion against him. Therefore take heed of omitting it, take heed of neglecting it. ○ Besides

Besides all this, wee should doe it for our owne sakes, if we consider what vse we haue of this duty for our selues. Is it not the key that openeth all God's treasures? when heaven was shut vp, was not this the key that opened? when the wombes were shut vp, was not this it that opened? you know, *Elijah prayed for raine*; so we may say for every other blessing. All God's treasures are locked vp, to those that doe not call vp on his name, this opens the doore to them all, whatsoever they be that we haue occasion to vse, this is effectuall; it doth it better then any thing besides. If a man be fickle, I will be bold to say it, a faithfull prayer is more able to heale his disease then the best medicine; *The prayer of faith shall heale the sicke, Jam. 5.* you know, the woman that had the bloody issue, when she had spent all vp on Phisitians, and could doe no good, then she comes to Christ, and offered a faithfull prayer to him, that did it, when so many years phisick could not doe it; Beloved, if there be a Prince, or a great man, whose mind we would haue turned towards vs, a faithfull prayer will doe it sooner then the best friends. So it was with *Nehemiah*, you know his request, that the Lord would give him favour in the sight of the man, if we be in any strait, as it was in *Josephs* case, if wee haue any difficult matter to bring to passe, this prayer and seeking to the Lord will expedite, and set vs at liberty sooner, it will finde a way to bring it about more then all the wits in the world, because it sets God on worke. You haue no power to doe any thing.

C 3

Certainly

5  
The benefit of  
it.Prayer the key  
to unlocke  
Gods treasures,

James 5.

Nchm. 12.

Prayer preva-  
lent.

Certainly a praying Christian that is prevalent and potent with God, (that seekes to him) he is able to doe more then all the witches in the world, they set the divell a worke; but prayer sets God a worke, it sets him a worke to do vs good, & to heale vs, & to deliver vs out of extremities; and therefore, I say, for our owne sakes, even out of self-loue, and for common comforts, you haue need to vse this. Certainly, if these things were beleeved, (but you heare them, you giue vs the hearing for the time, but if they were beleeved,) many would be more frequent in this duty, they would not be so negligent in it, or come in so carelesse a manner to it.

<sup>6</sup>  
It is the best  
way to fill the  
heart with ioy.

Ioh. 16. 24.

James. 5. 13.

Phil. 4. 6.

Besides this, I beseech you to consider this, every man desires joy, and comfort, & commonly one thing that keepes vs off from this duty, is sports and pleasures, one thing or other, that we take delight in, which dampe and hinder vs in these things, in spirituall performances; Prayer is the best way of all other to fill thy heart with joy, as we see in *Ioh. 16. 24.* he saith there, *In my name you haue asked nothing hitherto, but now aske, that your ioy may be full.* This is one motiu that Chr. st vseth to exhort vs to bee frequent in this duty, that our joy may be full: that I take to bee the meaning of that of *James. 5.* *If any man be sad, let him pray;* not onely because prayer is sutable to such a disposition, but likewise it will cheere him vp, it is the way to get comfort, *if any be sad, let him pray.* So it is in *Phil. 4. 6.* *In all things make your requests knowne, and the peace of God shall keepe*

keepe you in the communion of Iesu Christ: That is it, that brings peace, and quietnesse; and therefore there is much reason, why we should be constant in this duty, it is that which quickens vs, it is that which fills vs with joy, and comfort, and with peace, which is that every one desires.

Moreover, consider it is thy buckler, prayer is the helmet that keeps thee safe; when a man neglects it, when he ceaseth to goe to God by prayer, when he once shewes himselfe to be a stranger to the Lord by neglecting this duty, then he is out of the pales of his protection, like the conies that goe out of their burrowes: for so is the Lord to those that pray, the Lord is a protection to those that call vpon his name. The very calling vpon his name is a running vnder Gods wings, as it were, that is, a putting our selues vnder his shadow, but when thou neglectest that, thou wandrest abroad from him. Now doe we not neede protection from outward dangers, from day to day? doe we not need to be kept from the inward danger of sinne and temptation? surely prayer is one part of the spirituall Armour, as we see Eph. 6. In the compleat armor of God, prayer is reckoned vp the last, as that that buckles vp all the rest, saith the Apostle, *Continue in prayer, and watch to it with perseverance.* And you haue the more reason to do it, because it is not only a part of this armour, but it enables you to vse all the rest, to vse the word, & to vse faith; for prayer stirrs them vp all. What is it to haue Armour, and not to haue it ready? now praier makes it ready. Therfore you

Our safety con-  
fists in it.

Eph 6.

Praier teacheth  
to vse the rest  
of the spirituall  
armour.

Mat. 26.41.

Note.

Wee cannot  
love Christ but  
wee must call  
upon him,

see Christ prescribes the same rule in Mat. 26.41.  
*pray that ye enter not into temptation*, as if that were the way to secure vs, and to shelter vs, and to keepe vs safe from falling into temptation. It is a thing I would advise you to, to pray, and to seeke to the L o R D continually. Therfore, if we shoulde vse onely this reason to you, to be constant in this duty, because it is for your safety, it were sufficient. You know when a man is *as a City whose walls are broken downe*, when hee lyes exposed to temptation, he is in a dangerous case. So I may vse this *Dilema* to you, if you haue a disposition, if you thinke thus, I hope I am well enough, I hope my heart is in a temper good enough, I am not now exposed to any temptation, I feare nothing, make this argument against thy selfe, why doe I neglect so good a gale, if my heart be so well disposed to pray, why doe I then omit it? Againe, if there be any indisposition in me, why doe I hazard my selfe? what if Sathan should set vpon thee? what if the world should set vpon thee? what if a sutable temptation agreeable to thy lusts be offered? art thou not in danger? and therefore a constant course should be kept in it, we shoulde take heed of being negligent in it. And will a man now professe that he hopes he is the servant of G o D, and in a goode-state, although he do not pray so much as others, (we speake not of frequency simply, but of such a performance as is required) I say, to professe that thou art a servant of Christ, and that thou lovest him, and that hee is thy husband, and that thou

art

art his servant, and yet thou callest not vpon him from day to day, this is an idle thing, it is impossible; if thou didst loue him, thou wouldest expresse thy selfe in calling vpon his name. Shall a friend that is but an acquaintance to vs, in whom wee delight, come to vs, and wee are willing to spend many houres with him, and shall we professe our selues to be friends of God and him to be a friend to vs, and that we delight in him, and yet neglect this duty? this is a common thing amongst you; when you see a man that meditates all his matters himselfe, or if hee doe open his minde, and tell them to some bodie else, it must bee such a one as professeth to be a friend to him; now if this friend should never heare from him, nor hee should never speake to him, or if hee doe, it is in such a negligent manner, as it may appeare, hee doth not trust him, hee doth not regard what he can doe for him, and hee doth it so shortly, that hee can scarcely tell what the busynesse is, I say, in such a case, would you not reckon his profession of friendship to be an idle, and empty profession? now apply it to thy selfe, those that say they haue communion with God, and they hope their estate is good enough, they stand in good tearmes with him, but yet, if they be in any necessity, for all the matters and occasions that fall out from day to day, either they thinke of them in themselves, or they are apt enough to declare them to man, or if they goe to God, they doe it negligently, they post over the matter, so as they haue

*Simile.*

If we befriends  
of God, wee  
must acquaint  
him with our  
state by prayer.

haue scarce leisure to expresse themselues and their doings; doe you thinke hee will take such for friends? and doe you thinke, that this is a true, sound and hearty profession? Therefore (to end this) I beseech you consider it, and take heede of being remisse, and negligent in it, you see it is a command from the L O R D , pray continually.

And so much for this time.

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**FINIS**

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THE



## THE SECOND SERMON.

I T H E S S . 5 . 17 .

*Pray continually. •*



Or to repeate what hath beene delivered, but to presse this point on vs a little further, (for what is more necessary, then that wee should keepe a constant course in this duty, since the very life of Religion consists in it?) I adde this to all I pressed in the morning, that if you doe neglect it, it exposeth you to great disadvantage, both for the outward man, and for the inward man, and there are but these two that you neede to care for.

For

8  
The omission  
of it doth dis-  
aduantage  
men.

I  
In the outward man.

*Simile.*

For the outward man, it deprives you of the blessing; put the case, you haue never so good successe in your enterprizes; put the case you haue outward comforts in abundance, yet still the blessing is wanting; and not onely so, but it vncovers the roofe, as it were, and the curse is rained downe vpon your tables, vpon your meat and drinke, vpon all the endeavours, and all the enterprizes you take in hand. We consider not what we doe, when wee neglect this duty, what dangers wee expose our selues vnto from day to day; for it is one thing to haue outward comforts, and another thing to haue the blessing with them.

2  
In the inward man.

*Simile.*

*Iob. 15.4.*

Besides, consider what losse you suffer in the inward man, when you neglect this duty at any time; for that is ready to be distempered, and to goe out of order, it is ready to contract hardness, to contract soile; spirituall grace is ready to decay. It falls out with mans heart, as it doth with a garden that is neglected; it will quickly be overrunne with weedes, if you looke not diligently to it, and the way to looke to it is constancy in this duty. That is a notable place, *Iob. 15.4.* when *Eliphaz* observed some distemper in *Jobs* affections(as he apprehended it) he tells him that the speech hee yeld was not comely, but vaine, and sinfull; and what then? surely *Iob*(saith hee) thou restraineſt prayer from the Lord, as if hee should say, it is impossible, *Iob*, that thou shouldest fall into these distempers, if thou diddest keepe thy course constantly in this duty; therefore

fore surely, saith he, thou restraineſt prayer from the L o R D ; So it is with vs, let vs restraine prayer from G o d , and distempers will arise quickly in our spirits, worldly mindednesſe will be ready to grow vpon vs, wee ſhall be apt to be carnall, we ſhall forget G o d , and forget our ſclues, and forget the good purpoſes, and deſires wee had; and therefore, that you may keepe your hearts in order, you muſt keepe a conſtant course in this duty: for if you doe, (though your peace be interrupted) this will repaire it againe, it will make vp the breaches againe; though there be ſome diſtempered affections, that grow vpon vs, yet prayer will compoſe all. As ſleepe compoſeth drunkeſneſſe, ſo prayer will compoſe the affections, a man may pray himſelfe sober againe, nothing doth it ſooner, nothing doth it more eſſe‐tually; and this you ſhall finde, that as you, ei‐ther omit it, or ſlight it over; ſo you ſhall finde a proportionable weakeſneſſe growing vpon the inward man, as the body feeles, when it ne‐glec‐teth either ſleepe, or diet, or exer‐cise: there‐fore, to end this exhortation, let vs be con‐ſtant in it.

Onely remember this, (when we exhort you thus to keepe a conſtant course, for which you heard ſo many reaſons in the morning, I ſay, re‐member this caution) that if it be performed in a formall, or in a cuſtomary, and overly manner, you were as good to omit it altogether: for the L o R D takes not our prayers by number, but by waight: when it is an outward picture, a dead carcaſſe

Inward diſtem‐pers arife if prayer be ne‐glec‐ted.

Simile.

Wee were as good not pray at all, as doe it in a formall or overly manner.

When prayer is  
performed a-  
right,

*Simile.*

*Simile.*

Prayer in a cu-  
stomary man-  
ner amends not  
the heart.

carcasse of prayer, when there is no life, no fer-  
vencie in it, hee regards it not, be not deceived  
in this, it is a very vsuall deceit, it may bee a  
mans conscience would bee vpon him, if hee  
should omit it altogether, and therefore when  
hee doth something, his heart is satisfied, and  
so hee growes worse and worse ; therefore,  
consider, that the very doing of the dutie, is  
not that which the L o r d heedes, but hee will  
haue it so performed ; that the end may bee ob-  
tained, and that the thing may be effected, for  
which you pray. If a man send his servant to goe  
to such a place, it is not his going to and fro that  
he regards, but hee would haue him to dispatch  
the busynesse, so in all other works, hee cares  
not for the formality of performance, but  
would haue the thing so done, that it may be  
of vse to him ; if you set a servant to make a fire  
for you, and he goe, and lay some greene wood  
together, and perhaps put a few coales vnder,  
this is not to make a fire for you, but he must,either  
get dry wood, or he must blow till it burne,  
and be fit for vse ; so when your hearts are vnfit,  
when they are like greene wood, when you come  
to warme them, and to quicken them by prayer  
to G o d, it may be you post over this dutie, and  
leauue your hearts as colde, and as distempered as  
they were before : My Beloved, this is not to per-  
forme this dutie: This dutie is effectually per-  
formed, when your hearts are wrought vpon by it,  
and when they are brought to a better tune, and  
to a better temper then they were before. If you  
finde

find sinfull lusts there, your businesse is to worke them out by prayer, to reason the matter, to ex-postulate the thing before the L O R D , and not to giue over, till you haue set all the wheeles of your soule right, till you haue made your hearts perfect with G o d ; and if you finde your hearts too much cleaving to the world, you must weane them, and take them off, if you finde a deadnesse, and vnaptnes, and indisposition in you, you must lift vp your soules to the L O R D , and not giue over till you be quickened, and this is to performe the dutie in such a manner as the L O R D accepts, otherwise it is an hypocriticall performance: for this is hypocrisie, when a man is not willing to let the dutie goe altogether, nor yet is willing to performe it fervently, and in a quicke, and zealous manner: for hee that omits it altogether is a profane person; and hee that performs it zealously, and to purpose, is a holy man: but an hypocrite goes betweene both, hee would doe something at it, but hee will not doe it throughly. And therefore, if thou finde that thou haft slubbered over this dutie from day to day, that thou performest it in a negligent manner, and perfusorily, know that it is an hypocriticall performance; and therefore when we spend so much time in exhorting you to a constant course in this dutie, still remember, that you must performe it in such a manner, that it may haue heate, and life in it, that it may be acceptable to G o d , and doe good to your owne hearts, to bring them to a more holy frame of grace,

What we must  
doe in prayer.

Hypocrisie  
what.

Note.

*1. Object.*

This duty requireth much time.

*Ansiv.*

Threefold.

*1. Ansiv.*

The time spent in prayer hindreth not.

Mal. 3.

*Simile.**2. Ansiv.*

It is greater then worldly busynesse, and therfore should be preferred.

grace, and to a better temper, then, it may bee, you found them in, when you went about the dutie.

And if you object now, I, but it will cost vs much time to doe this?

Indeed, one common cause, among all the rest, that keepes vs off from the thorow performance of this duty, is this: but, (to speake to that in a word) remember this, that the time that is spent in calling vpon G o d, hinders you not in your busynesse, though it seeme to hinder you, and though it takes so much from the heape, yet indeed it increaseth the heape, as it is said of tithes and offerings, *bring them in*, and thinke not, that because you lessen the heape, that you are poorer men, no, saith the L o r d, it will increase your store, *I will open the windowes of heaven*, and you shall haue so muchthe more for it; so it is true in this case. In other things you see it well enough. You know, the baiting of the horse, hinders not the journey, and the oyling of the wheele, and the whetting of the sithe, though there be a stop in the worke for a time, yet, as our common saying is, *a whet is no let*, and the doing of this is no impediment.

Secondly, put the case it were, yet is it not the greater busynesse? what is it that you get by all your labours, and travails? if it be riches, it comes not into any comparison with grace, and holinesse, with that riches wherewith prayer makes you rich. But, say it be somewhat more noble then that, as learning, and knowledge; yet, what

what is that to the renewing of God's image in vs? were it not better to spend time to get grace to make vs rich to God, to make vs to get strength in the inward man, to passe through all varieties of afflictions, in getting that which is the chiefeſt excellencie of all others: for is not that the best excellencie? When *Adam* was in *Paradise*, the having of Gods Image, you know, it excelled all other excellencies in the world, and so it doth still, and the more you pray, the more you get of this *Image*: for a man of much prayer is alwayes a man of much grace, it much increaseth those spirituall gifts, which are better then all the outward things you can get by your imployment and diligence in them: therefore, I say, though it doe ſpend you much time, yet know (as *Christ* ſaid to *Mary*) he that prayes much, though he be a great looſer in other things, yet he chooseth the better part.

Last of all, consider this, when thou commeft to offer ſacrifice to God, wouldest thou offer that which cost thee nothing? if thy continuing in prayer, and ſpending much time in it ſhould cost thee ſome diſadvantage in thy affairs, and ſhould looſe thee that which another gaines, that thou getteſt not ſo much knowledge, as another man doth, thou doeſt not ſo much in thy trade, in thy busiſſeſ, thou doeſt not ſet things in order, as thou miſtēſt haue done; yet know this, that it is great wiſedome to make our ſervice to God costly to vs, you know, David doth choiſe: Shall I offer to the Lord that which cost me nothing, and therefore

What is mans  
best excellency

Prayer increaſeth Gods Image.

3. Anſw.  
Wee must per-  
form it though  
with diſadvan-  
tage, that our  
ſacrifice may  
cost ſomewha-

he would needes giue the worth to *Auraunah* the *Iebusite* for that which he bought ; and therefore since it is to a good master , that sees what you doe, that knowes what it costeth, and what losse you are at, and withall, that is willing and able to recompence it, why should you shorten this businesse , and post it over , because of other occasions, and other businesse that you haue to doe ?

*1. Object.*  
In respect of  
vnfitnessse.

*1. Answ.*  
God accepts the  
will for the  
deed, when.

*2 Cor. 8.13,13*

*Answ. 2.*  
The best fit-  
ting to it is to  
fall vpon per-  
formance.

Oh, but, a man will say further, I am willing to doe it, but I am vnfit for it, and it may be the longer I striue, the more vnfit I grow.

To this I answer, first, in generall, if thou doe it as well as thou canst, though thou doe it not so well as thou wouldest, in this case, *God accepts the will for the deed*, when a man puts his strength to it, when there is no indiligeunce in him, when there is no lazinessse, (for in that case he will not accept the will for the deede, but) when a man doth his vtmost, as those that would haue given more, and could not, their will was accepted for the deede, in *2 Cor. 8.12*. I lay, when thou doest what thou canst, when thou sparest no labour to get thy heart vpon the wing, to raise and quicken it, and to inlarge it in this dutie : there *G o d* accepts it.

But againe, I adde further, there is an *vnskilfulnesse* in going about this dutie : many times when we are not fit, we thinke to make our selues fitter, by spending time in thoughts, and meditations before, which I denie not but they may be profitable, but yet this I will propound to you that

that the best way to fit our selues to this duty, when we finde an indisposition vnto it, is, not to stay till wee haue prepared our selues by meditation, but to fall presently vpon the dutie, (I will giue you the reason of it) because, though a preparation is required for the performance of every spirituall duty, yet, the remote preparation is that which is intended, and meant, when we say we must prepare: for, if we speake of that which is immediate, the very doing of the dutie is the best preparation to it. For example, if a man were to runne a race, if he were to doe any bodily exercise, there must be strength of bodie, he must be fed well, that he may haue abilitie, but the vse of the very exercise it selfe, the very particular act, that is of the same kind with the exercise, is the best to fit him for it, so in this duty of prayer, it is true, to be *strong in the inward man*, to haue much knowledge, to haue much grace, makes a man able, and fit for the duty; but, if you speake of the immediate preparation for it, I say, the best way to prepare vs, is the very dutie it selfe; as all actions, of the same kinde, increase the habits, so prayer makes vs fit for prayer; and that is a rule, *the way to godlinesse is in the compassio-*  
*of godlinesse it selfe*; that is, the way to grow in any grace is the exercise of that grace.

It is a point that *Luther* press'd, and hee pres-  
sed it out of his owne experience, and this rea-  
son he vseth; in this case, saith he, when a man  
goes about to fit himselfe, by working on his  
owne thoughts, now he goes about to overcome

*Simile.*

Exercise of  
grace increa-  
seth it.

*Note.*

Note this ex-  
pression of Lu-  
ther.

By labouring  
against indis-  
position by our  
owne strength  
we are more  
intangled.

*Obiect.*

*Ansiv.*

7 Impediments  
in prayer, that  
makes it diffi-  
cuit.

What makes us  
so slight prayer

his vnfittesse by his owne strength, and to contend with Sathan alone, but when a man feeleth an indisposition, and goes to God by prayer, and rests on God to fit him, he takes Gods strength to oppose the indisposition, and deadnesse of his flesh; and the temptations of Sathan, that hinder him, and resist him. Therefore you shall find this to be the best way to fit your selues for prayer, namely, to performe the duty. If you seeke to expedite, and devolve your selues out of your vnfittesse, by the working of your owne thoughts, commonly, you involue your selues farther into those labyryntis, and are caught more and more. But this I speake by the way concerning matter of vnfittesse. The maine answer to this objecti-  
on, is that which I gaue you before, that if a man doe what he can, and doe it faithfully, and in sin-  
cerity, that indisposition shall not hinder him, but still remember, it must be done, it is not an ex-  
cuse to vs, at any time, nor ought to be, that we should omit the duty wholly, vnder pretence of an vnfittesse.

Thirdly, a man is ready to say againe, but I find many difficulties, how shal I do to remoue them?

The best way hereunto, is the very naming of the difficulties to you, that you may know them, and make account of them; therefore you must consider this in generall, that, indeede, it is not an easie thing to call vpon God constantly: our misprision of the dutie, our reckoning of it, that it is a more facile, and easie thing, then it is, makes vs more to slight it, and causeth vs

vs not to goe about it with that intention, which otherwise wee would; but consider a little what it *is*. The dutie is very spirituall, and our hearts are carnall, and it is no easie thing to bring spirituall duties, and carnall hearts together.

Besides, our natures are very backward to come into the L o r d s presence, partly by reason of his great glory, by reason of his Majesty, who dwells in light inaccessible, and our weak ey's are apt to be dazzled with it; and partly out of an accustomednesse, we are not vsed to it, and therefore we are ready to fly from him, as beasts that are wild, and are not tamed to our hands, are ready to fly from vs, so backward is our nature to come into his presence.

Againe, the variety of occasions hinders vs, every thing keepes vs backe; if a mans heart be cheerefull, it is apt to delight in other things; if a mans heart be sad, on the other side; if it be a slight sadness, men are ready to driue it away with company, and with sports, and with doing other things; and if the sadness be great, we are swallowed vp with anguish of spirit, and then anything is easier then to pray, as you may see by *Judas*, it was easier for him to dispatch himselfe, then to goe and call vpon God; so it is with men, when they haue excessiue griefe, when their anguish of heart is exceeding great: so that, whether a man hath a cheerefull disposition, or a sad, whether the sadness be great or small, still you shall finde a difficulty. If we be idle, and haue

I  
Impediments  
Our hearts are  
carnall.  
Note this.

2  
Wee are loath  
to come into  
Gods presence,  
and why.

Smile.

3  
Variety of oc-  
casions hinder  
vs.

Note.

nothing to doe, our hearts will be possest with vaine thoughts, and, if wee be full of busynesse, that distractes vs also, and indisposeth vs, on the other side: so still there are impediments.

4  
Worldly cares.

But there is one great impediment, among the rest, and most common, which is worldly cares, and worldly-mindednesse; worldly cares hinder spirituall prayer, and spirituall conference, and the holy performance, almost, of every duty; and therefore if you finde a difficultie in it, looke narrowly, if that be not the cause.

5  
Want of faith  
in Gods power  
and providence

Againe, another great cause of this difficultie in prayer, of such backwardnesse to it, of such indisposition to it, is, because we doe not well consider the nature of God, we want faith in his power, and in his providence, we doe not consider, that he hath that disposing hand, which he hath in every thing that belongs to vs, in health, in sicknesse, in povertie, in riches, in good successe, and ill successe: for, if we did see the providence of God, and acknowledge it more, we should be ready to call vpon him, but this want of faith in his providence, that the Lord is not seene in his greatnessse, and in his mighty power, this caufeth men to be backward to seek to him, but very forward to seeke to the creatures. When we haue any thing to do, of any consequence, we are ready to post from this man to that man, and from this meanes to that meanes, but very backward, and negligent to goe to God, in prayer, to haue the thing brought to passe, that wee desire, and this ariseth from want of faith, and from ignorance.

norance of G o d, and our not consideration of him.

Besides, Sathan hindres vs exceedingly in this duty; for he knowes of what moment it is, and of what consequence, and therefore hee doth as the Aramites did, hee *fights not against small nor great, but against the K.ng*, he knowes it is this duty which quickens every grace, it is the greatest enemy, which he hath, and if he can keepe vs from prayer, hee hath the vpper hand of vs, hee hath wrested the weapon out of our hands, hee hath disarmed vs, as it were, and then hee may doe what he will with vs.

Likewise the sins we commit, especially grosse sinnes, they are a great hinderance to this dutie, and keepe from the spirituall, and cheerefull performance of it: for sinne wounds the conscience, it disjoyneth, and dismembers the soule, and a disjoynted member, you know, is vnfit to doe any businesse; yea when the sinne is healed, and forgiven, yet there is a sorenesse left in the heart, though some assurance of pardon should follow, vpon the commission of a great sinne, so that, that is another impediment. I must not stand to reckon vp many, we shall find enough by continuall experience.

Onely this vse we must make of it, that, if the impediments be so many, and the difficulties that keepe vs from a constant course in prayer, and from the performance of it to purpose, so great, then we must put on a resolution to breake through all, and lay it, as an inviolable law vpon

6  
Sathan hin-  
dredeth.

1 King. 12. 31

7  
The commis-  
sion of great  
sinnes.

Simile.

Vse.  
What course is  
to be taken a-  
gainst these  
impediments.

A new indisposition will bee  
on us daily to  
prayer.

Note this well.

Removing the  
objections that  
are against  
prayer doth  
strengthen us  
to the dutie.

our selues, that we will not alter. Let vs thinke with our selues that the thing is difficult, and will cost all the care, and all the intention that may be; yea, when thou hast overcome the difficulties at one time, it may be, the next day, thou shalt meet with new conflicts, new distempers, new affections, new strengthl of lusts, and a new disposition of minde will be on thee, and therefore he that will be constant in this duty, must put on a strong resolution; as it was the saying of a holy man, one of the holiest men, that these latter times had, that he never went to pray to God but he found so many impediments, that except he bound himselfe by an vnalterable resolution, that hee resolved not to breake vpon any occasion, he could never haue kept a constant course in it, or, if he had, he should never haue kept himselfe from a formall, customary performance of it. But I will adde no more; to prese this vpon you, there hath beeene enough said, I beseech you consider it.

Now that which I promised in the morning to doe, which is, that, that doth exceedingly strengthen vs to the performance of this dutie of calling vpon G o d, of *praying continually*, (which we are here commanded to doe) is to remooue certaine objections, which are in the mindes of men, that secretly weaken the estimation of this truth, and insensibly takes vs off, when wee marke them not: for, Beloved, when we are so negligent in it, surely there is something that is the cause of it; and if wee could finde the cause,

cause, and remoue it, wee could not spend an houre better.

The objections, that are commonly in the hearts of men, are many, I will name to you but these foure briefly.

First, a man is ready to say, what need I spend so much time, and be so large in the expression of my wants to G o d, when he knowes them? I cannot make them better knowne to him, hee knowes them well enough already, and therefore what needeth it?

To this I answer (in a word, because it is an objection that hath not much weight in it) that it is true, the L o r d knowes thy wants, but withall, he will haue thee to know them; because, otherwise, thou wilt not seeke to him, thou wilt not set a price vpon the things, that he bestowes on thee, thou wilt not be thankfull to him, when he hath granted them; and therefore you shall finde, our Saviour Christ vteth this very argument, as a meanes to quicken vs to prayer, saying, *Your heavenly Father knowes what you haue need of;* what then? shall we not therefore pray? yes, saith he, therefore pray yee the more earnestly, and the more importunately to him: for since he knowes your wants, he will be more ready to heare your requests.

I, but it will be said againe, that he doth not onely know them, but he also meanes, and purposeth to bestow them: for he hath made a promise to vs, and his promise is firme, and sure, and G o d is just, and must keepe his promise, and when he hath

4. Obiections  
against prayer.

1. Obiect.

*Answ.*  
Why God will  
haue us to pray  
though hee  
know our  
wants.

Mat. 6.

2. Obiect.

*Ansiv. 1.*  
Though God  
purposeth to give  
blessings, it is  
vpon condition  
that we pray.

1 King 18. 41,  
42.

2 Sam. 7. 11.  
2 Sam. 7. 18.

Dan. 9.

*Ansiv. 2.*  
He wil haue vs  
doe it to wor-  
ship him.

To worship  
God, what.

hath fully purposed it, what needs so much pray-  
ing to bring it to passe?

I answer, the promises of God are to be un-  
derstood with this secret condition annexed, I  
will doe such and such a thing for you, if you  
pray, though it be not expressed: and therfore, we  
see when God promised things in particular,  
yet still they prayed, and prayed earnestly. When  
he promised *Elijah* that it should raine, yet, wee  
see, he prayed, and contended much in his pray-  
er; when hec made a promise to *David*, that he  
would make him an house, yet, you know, *David*  
went to the house of the Lord, and sate before  
him, and made earnest prayer, as is recorded in  
the 2. of *Sam*. So *Daniel* had a particular promise,  
and yet he prayed, and praied long. The example  
of our Saviour Christ is without exception, who  
had all the promises sure to him, yet, you see, he  
prayed, yea, he spent whole nights in prayer, and ther-  
fore, you must so understand it, that though you  
haue a promise made, though the thing be never  
so sure to you, yet it is to be vnderstood with  
that, if you call vpon God.

And why the Lord will haue you doe it,  
I shewed you many reasons in the morning, we  
will adde this to it. What, if the Lord will haue  
thee call vpon him, though hee purpose to doe  
the thing, even for this end, that thou maist wor-  
ship him? for, what is it to worship the Lord?  
you shall finde this vsuall in the olde Testament,  
*The people bowed themselves and worshipped, or they*  
*fell vpon their faces and worshipped.* The meaning  
is

is this, to worship G o d is nothing else, but to acknowledge the worthinesse that is in him. As when you doe worship to a man, you doe vse so much outward demeanour and obseruance to him, as may acknowledge a worth in him aboue another man: outward gesture, that is the outward worshipping of G o d , the inward worship is inwardly to acknowledge his attributes. Now, you shall see, prayer giues an acknowledgement of his attributes most of any thing: for hee that prayes to G o d , he doth, in so doing, acknowledge his omnipresence, and his omniscience; that hee heares that, which the Idols of the *Gentiles* could not do; that he knowes the secrets of mens hearts, that neither men, nor Angels can doe.

Againe, it acknowledgeth his Almighty power, that hee is able to doe any thing; for that is presupposed, when wee come, and seeke to him.

Againe, it acknowledgeth his mercie, and his goodnesse; that he is not onely able, but exceeding willing to helpe.

Againe, it acknowledgeth his truth, that as he hath promised, so, I make account, he will per-forme it, when I goe, and seeke to him; in a word, all the attributes of G o d are acknowledged in prayer. Therefore therein you worship him in a speciall manner, when you goe, and seeke to him, and pray to him, in so doing, you acknowledge him, yea you acknowledge him to be a L o r d , and a father; as, when we see a child run to a man, and aske him blessing, when we see him aske him foode,

Prayer ac-  
knowledgeth  
all Gods at-  
tributes.

Simile.

foode, and rayment, we say, surely such a man is his father; so this very praying to God, is a worshipping of him, because it acknowledgeth his attributes, and his relation<sup>ys</sup>, and ours to him.

## 3. Object.

*Answe.*  
God is not  
changed by  
our prayers, but  
our selues.

*Smile.*

But againe, thirdly, it will bee objected, I but, alas, what can the endeavours or the prayers of a weake man doe? can they change the purpose of Almighty God, if hee doe not intend to doe this thing for me, shall I hope to alter him?

For answe to this, I say this, in briefe, that when you doe call vpon God, hee is not changed by your prayers, but the change is wrought in you, as we haue said to you heretofore, when a Phyſitian is sought vnto by his patient, the patient desires him earnestly to giue him ſuch a cordiall, and ſuch restorative Phyſicke, that is pleasing to him; the Phyſitian denies him long, yet in the end, he yeelds vnto it. Why? not because there is any change in the Phyſitian, but because there is a change in the patient, hee is now fitted for this, before hee was not: ſo then the Phyſitian yeelds now, whereas before hee refused, and yet the change is in the patient, and not in the Phyſitian, and therefore, beloved, when you go about to ſtrive with God in prayer, when you contend, and wrastle with him, (for ſo we ought to doe) when you vſe many reaſons to perſuade him, you alter not him, but your ſelues: for thoſe arguments that you vſe, are not ſo much to perſuade him to helpe you,

you, as to perswade your hearts to more faith, to more loue, to more obedience, to more humility, and thankfulness, and that indeede is the reason, why prayer prevailes with God, not that the very sending vp is that, that prevales with him, but because a faithfull, and a spirituall prayer putteth the heart in a better disposition, so that a man is now made readie to receiue a blessing at Gods hands, that before hee was not: So that, when you thinke you draw God to you, with your arguments, in truth, you draw your selues neerer to him; as when a man in a shipp pluckes a rocke, it seemeth as if hee plucked the rocke neerer to the shipp, when as the shipp is plucked neerer to the rocke: so, I say, we draw our selues neerer to the Lord, and when we draw neerer to the Lord, in prayer, and there is a spirituall disposition wrought in our hearts, by the exercise of this dutie, then indeede the Lord drawes neare to vs, to send vs helpe, and to grant our requests, that wee put vp to him, and therefore, that you should marke by the way, that any prayer, as it hath a higher pitch of holiness in affection, and as it hath stronger arguments in it; so it is a better prayer; not because this prayer shall prevaile with God more, or, that the excellencie of this prayer should moue him, but because this pitch of holy affection, and strength of argument workes vpon your hearts: for the strength of arguments moues your vnderstanding, and the holiness of affection putteth your will in a frame,

Arguments in  
prayer are not  
to perswade  
God but our  
selues.

*Simile.*

What prayers  
are the best.

*Obiect. 4.*  
Twofold.

1

2

*Answe.*

I  
Answer to the  
first part of the  
objection.

*Answe. I.*

frame, and so disposeth your hearts, and fits you, as the patient, we speake of before, is fitted, when the Physitian is willing to giue the thing hee desired.

But the last objection, which indeede is more then all the rest, is this.

A man is ready to say, we see there are many men that doe not call vpon G o d, and yet enjoy many mercies : it may be, a man can say with himselfe, whea hee did not vse to pray, hee had health, and sleepe, and protection ?

Againe, on the other side, he hath prayed for such and such things, and yet they haue not been granted : so this objection hath two parts, that a man hath obtained blessings, without prayer, and againe he hath prayed, and yet hath not obtained the blessings he sought for, at the L o r d s hands.

For answer to the first, that men doe obtaine many blessings that doe not pray, (as how many young men are there, and olde men too, that haue health, and wealth, and peace, and libertie, and abundance of all things, and yet, either they seeke not to G o d, or, if they doe, yet not in a holly and spirituall manner) and therefore this objection had need to be answered ; and therefore I answer briefly.

First, though they haue these blessings, yet they haue them vncertainly, they haue no promise of them, they cannot build vpon them, whereas they are sure mercies to the righteous man, he can build vpon these blessings : for hee hath

hath a father to goe to, whose loue he knowes, and he hath sure promises to build on; the other, though he hath them, yet he is in a slippery place, when he enjoys them; it is an accidentall thing, he hath them from the hand of an enemy, and he knowes not how long he shall enjoy them.

But I answer again (which is the chiefe answer to this objection) that there is a great deale of difference betweene having blessings through the providence of God, and betweene having them from the mercie of God, & by vertue of his promise, and out of his loue to vs in Christ Jesus. A naturall man may haue many blessings of God, (so God said that he made Jeroboam a King, he gaue him a Kingdome; and many such passages we shall finde, when men come vniustly to them, as he did to the Kingdome, yet God saith he did it, that is, it was by his providence) and yet hee hath them not in mercie: for if thou haft these blessings, health, and sleepe, and successe in the enterpris(es), from day to day, and yet thy heart tells thee within, that thou hast not sought them at the Lord's hands, as thou oughtest, I say to such a man, (and marke it) it were better for him that hee should want them: for certainly, when he hath them, in this manner, he hath them without a blessing; yea he hath them with a curse, and so had better to be without them, as it had been better for Ahab to haue beeene without his vineyard, and as it had beeene better for Gehazi to haue gone without his reward, that hee had of Naaman

Men that haue  
blessings with-  
out prayer haue  
them uncer-  
tainly.

*Answe. 2.*  
Difference be-  
tweene hauing  
of blessings  
through the  
providence of  
God, and from  
the loue of  
God.

To haue out-  
ward things  
without prayer  
we wvere better  
want them,

man the *Affrian*, for you know he had the leprosie with it; it had bene better for the children of *Israel* to haue gone without their quales; for you know the curse that followed, death went along with them; so when a man shall haue peace and prosperity, and abundance of all things, without seeking them at the *L o r d s* hands, from day to day, I say, he were better to haue wanted them; for there goes death together with them. It is said plainly, that *ease slayeth the foolish*, (that isto say) this very prosperity, this thriving, (notwithstanding a neglecting of prayer, and of holy duties) I say, it carries death along with it, as the obtaining of the vineyard, brought death to *Achab*, the getting of the Kingdome was the destruction of *Ieroboam*; and therefore men haue little cause to comfort themselues with this, that they enjoy many blessings, and never pray for them.

3. *Answe.*  
Many things  
bestowed on  
wised men  
for the Chur-  
ches good.

May 45. 4.

But, to answer this point more fully, I say many blessings are bestowed vpon men, not for their owne sakes, but for the Churches sake. A man may haue strength of body, hee may haue great gifts of mind, he may haue great successe in vsing those gifts, he may bring great enterprizes to passe, so that you may truely lay, the hand of *G o d* is with him; all this may be done, not for his sake, but for the sake of the Church, and glory of *G o d* some other way, that he might doe some service; as you see, it is plainly said of *Cyrus*, *Isa.45.4.* speaking there of *Cyrus*, saith the *L o r d* there, *For Iacob my servants sake, and for Is-*  
*rach*

and mine elect sake I have called thee by name, and  
have given thee this great power, and all this great  
successe, althoough thou thy selfe haue not knowne me.

( Marke ) Cyrus was a most prosperous man,  
G o d s hand was mighty with him, and yet  
all this was not for his owne sake, but for the  
Churches sake: so you may thinke it is, when  
men prosper, many times, it is not for their  
owne sakes, but to fulfill some other end of  
G o d s providence; and therefore, marke this,  
and keepe it for a rule, if thou prosper in thy  
enterprizes, if thou enjoy weal, and peace,  
and abundance of all things, and know that  
thou doest not seeke to G o d s; from day to day,  
that thou keepest not thy heart right and straight,  
and perfect before him, thou doest not call  
vpon him, in a holy, and spirituall manner, cer-  
tainely it is for one of those causes, thou hast it  
without a blessing, and with a curse, thou hast it  
for other ends, and not for good to thy selfe;  
and therefore thou haft it very vncertainly, it  
may be tooke from thee, thou knewest not how  
soone; yea, and this thou shalte be sure of, that  
it shall be a taken from thee then, when, of all o-  
ther times, it will be vnsitteſt for thee: as a theefe  
comes at a time, when men least looke for him;  
so *deſtruſion comes ſuddenl*y vpon these men;  
G o d cuts them as a man, when he would haue  
trees to die, hee loppes them in that ſeafon, that  
of all others is the vnsitteſt, when the ſappe is in  
the tree, when the lopping will cauſe them to wi-  
ther, ſo the L o n g will ſtrike them in ſuch a ſea-  
fon.

Note this.

Simile.

Simile.

son. It is quite contrary with the Saints, he cuts them in due season, hee loppes them in due time, that they may grow the better for it, it is good for them.

Answer to the  
2. part of the  
objection.

But now for the other part of the objection it may be, many among you are now ready to say, I haue prayed for such and such things, and I haue beeene earnest, and yet the L o R D hath denied mee : my Beloved, if wee can satisfie this objection, we shall then take this impediment away, that we propound in this objection, that hath these two parts. Therefore to this I answere.

*Answ. I.*  
Our prayers  
oltrives: rea-  
misse in one of  
these three re-  
spects.

First, in respect  
of the principle  
vwhence they  
flow, when  
they are but  
naturall de-  
sires.

First, if thou hast not beeene heard in thy prayer, consider, if thou haue not *prayed amisse*; it is a common fault among vs, when wee haue spent much time in prayer, and, it may be, we haue spent time in fasting, and praying, and the thing is not granted; wee prelenty lay it vpon the L o R D, that hee hath not heard, when many times the cause is in our not praying, as wee ought, it may bee thou hast beeene very earnest, and therefore thou hopest thou hast done very well: I tell thee, thou maist be very earnest, and importunate with the L o R D, when it may be no more but a naturall desire, whena man hath neede to be directed in a difficult case, that much concernes him; when he hath neede to be extricated, and taken out of such a difficultie, and strait, wherein he is involved, when he hath need of successe, in such an enterprise, or any thing of that nature; I say, a man may be earnest with the

L o R D

LO RD in such a case, and yet his prayer may be amisse, it may not be a spirituall prayer, it may not be an expression of holy desires to the LO RD; for they onely prevaile with him; not that the naturall are excluded, (that is not my meaning) for they may adde windes to the sayles, though holinesse may guide the rudder, and keepe the course, and make the sterage, yet naturall desires may make vs more importunate, and may adde much to it: therefore, I say, consider thy prayer.

Consider againe, when thou hast sought so earnestly to GOD, whether it be not to bestow it vpon thy lusts, as the Apostle speakes, *Iam. 4.3.* when thou hast a businesse to be performed, it may be, thou art earnest with GOD, but hast thou not an eye to thy owne glory, to thine owne praise and credit in it? when thou wast earnest for health, was it not that thou mightest live more deliciously? when thou desirest wealth, and successse in thine enterprizes, that tend to mend thy state, is it not out of some ambition? you know, that desire is condemned, *if any man will be rich;* is it not a desire of greatnesse? would you not be some body in your place, and set vp your house and family? such things indeed GOD bestowes vpon men, but to haue our desires pitched vpon them, and to pray for them in that sense, is amisse, and my rule for it is in the first to *Timothy,* the sixth chapter, the ninth verle; *If a man will be rich, &c.* that is, when a man desirereth excessiuely, when he desirereth more then *foode,* and

Naturall de-sires not exclu-ded in true prayer.

Simile.

Secondly, in re-spect of the end when they are for the satisfa-cion of our iusts.  
*Iam 4.3.*

<sup>1</sup> *Tim. 6.9.*

When the naturall affection degenerates into a lust.

rayment convenient for him; now the naturall affection is degenerate into a lust: for when any affection exceeds, it ceaseth to be an affection, and begins to be a lust; and therefore where it is said, If any man will be rich, &c. it is said after, it is a lust.

*Quest.*

*Answe.*

How to know when we pray to bestow things on our lusts.

*Simile.*

But you will say, how shall a man know, when he prayeth to bestow that, which he prayeth for, vpon his lusts?

I answere, if a man consult with his owne heart, and deale impartially with himselfe, he may know what his ends are; but, if you cannot finde it out that way, you may know it by the effect, you may know it by the bills you bring in. What is the expence of the things God hath bestowed on you, when hee hath put a price into your hands; consider how you bestow it. If a steward haue a great summe of money, that his master hath trusted him with, and his bills bee, that he hath bestowed so much in riot, so much in fine apparrell, &c. but there hath beene but so much bestowed for his masters advantage, it is an argument he hath spent it ill: so, when we see, there hath beene so much health spent, so much time, and so much strength, in following our owne plots, and our owne worldly businesse, without respect to God, not serving God, and men in our calling, as wee should doe, and that there hath beene little time bestowed in prayer, in reading, in making our hearts perfect with God, in taking paines with them, from day to day, I say, if wee looke vpon the bill of expence,

pence, and consider how we haue bestowed our time, our health, our strength, our wits, from day to day, and our speech, (for that is one price that we haue in our hands, by which wee may doe good; it is as a bucket by which wee may draw from others; and likewise it is a spring, and fountaine, wherewith we may feede others, with the waters of life) consider, how we haue laid out all these things, and by that wee may know, how we are disposed to vse the blessings, we seeke for at G o d s hands, whether wee seeke them to bestow them vpon our lusts, or to spend those gifts to our Masters advantage; and, if we finde we doe it for our owne lusts, in this case, I say to you, goe and amend your prayers, and G o d will amend your speeding. We must doe in this case, as an angler doth, when he hath throwne the bait into the river, if it stay long, and catch nothing, he takes vp the baite, and amends it, and when he sees it is well, hee then continues, and waites; so wee must doe in this case, ift hou pray, and pray long, and haue not obtained the thing thou prayest for, looke diligently to thy prayers; see whether they be right or no, if they be not, amend thy prayers, and G o d will amend his readinesse to heare thee; if thou finde, they be sincere and hearty, mingled with holy desires, and not with carnall, and corrupt affections, then let the baite lye still, that is, continue to pray, and to waite, and the L o r d will come in due time.

But this is not all, though it bee one thing;

*Simile.*

*Simile.*

<sup>2</sup>  
In respect of  
the manner,  
when they are  
uttered care-  
lessly,

What moues  
God to doe us  
good & euill.

*Ans/w. 2.*  
God grants  
our prayers oft  
times, yet,

First, not in  
that manner,  
as we desire,

besides, when thou art not heard, consider, if thou hast not prayed amisse ; it is a common fanlt amongst vs, when we succeede not in any thing, wee attribute it to many other things, but not to our remisnesse and carelesnesse in seeking to **G o d**, if a man want sleepe, if hee finde sicknesse, and weakness, and distemper of bo-  
die, heethinkes that hee hath eaten amisse, and considers not whether he hath prayed amisse ; if a man haue miscarried in his businesse, he begins to thinke, whether hee haue not beene improvi-  
dent, whether he hath not dealt foolishly ; whe-  
ther he hath not omitted such and such meanes,  
as he might haue vsed, hee never thinkes whether  
hee haue prayed amisse ; and that indeede, is the  
cause of our miscarriying, and not commonly  
the thing, which wee attribute it vnto : for  
though **G o d** be not the immediate cause, you  
know hee is the great cause ; *There is no ill, that  
he hath not done :* and that which moues him is  
alway grace, and sinne ; that which moues him  
to doe vs good, is our obedience to him ; that  
which moues him on the contrary, is neglect on  
our part.

But, to answe further, suppose thy prayers  
bee right, yet, thou must consider this, that,  
when thou thinkest thou art not heard, thou art  
oft times deceived, and therefore, you must  
rectifie that misconceit. As for example, some-  
times, when wee would haue the thing in one fa-  
shion, **G o d** bestowes the same thing vpon vs in  
another ; and therefore thou maist be deceived  
in

in that, it may be, a man prayes earnestly, that he may haue a strong body, to doe G o d service withall, it may be, that sicknesse of body makes him doe him better service, because it keepes him in more awe, it weanes him more from the world, and makes him more heavenly minded: you know the case of *Paul*, he would faine haue had that lust taken away that is spoken of, *2 Cor. 12.9.* and why? surely the thing hee would haue had, was to haue his heart in a holy, and right frame of grace; now, though *Paul* had it not that way, that hee looked for it, yet he hath it another way, the L o R D increased in him the grace of humility by it; hee saw his owne weaknesse, and the power of C h r i s t the more; and when this was discovered vnto him he was content. It is all one, whether a man be preserved from the blow of an enemie, or haue an helmet given him to keepe it off; it may be a man prayes for money, and for estate; if G o d provide meat and drinke, and cloathes immediately, in stead of this, is it not all one? It may be another would haue a greater degree of convenioncie, for his dwelling house, and many other things; if G o d give him a body able to endure that, which is more course, all is one, as if hee were provided for more delicately: it is all one, whether a phisitian quench the thirst of his patient by giving him beere, and drinke, that is comfortable vnto him, or by giving him barberies, or somewhat else, that will doe the thing as well.

*2 Cor 12,9.**Simile.**Simile.*

It is all one, whether the L O R D keepe an enemie from doing vs hurt, or that he giues vs a strong helmet, a buckler, to keepe off the injury from wounding of vs: I might giue you more instances, though the L O R D giue thee not the thing in the very manner that thou wouldest haue it, yet hee will doe it in another manner.

<sup>5</sup> Not by those  
meanes, which  
we propound.

*Instances.*

Secondly, as we are deceived in the manner, so we are deceived in the meanes oft times, in seeking to G o d . When a man prayes, he pitcheth vpon such a particular meanes, and thinkes verily that this is the way, or none; it may be, the L O R D will finde out another way, that thou diddest never dreame of; *Paul* prayed to haue a prosperous journey to *Rome*, hee little thought, that when he was bound at *Ierusalem*, and posted vp and downe from one prisone to another, G o d was now sending him to *Rome*, yet he sent him, and sent him very safe with a great company attending vpon him, he sent him it may be in a better manner then hee himselfe would haue gone, and yet it was by such a meanes, as he could never dreame of; also you know, *Naaman* the *Affyrian*, he had pitched vpon a particular meanes, he thought the Prophet would haue surely *come forth, and haue laid his hands upon him*, but to goe and wash in *Jordan*, he thought his labour all lost, and the request which he made to the Prophet, to no purpose; for it was a thing that he never thought of, it was a weake and poore meanes, that hee made no account of, yet that was the meanes

meanes that God intended: so I say, we oft deceiue our selues, wee pitch vpon such particular wayes, and when these faile vs, and when wee haue prayed, that these meanes might be vsed, and God doth not vs them, we think presently we are deceived. *Joseph* thought verily *Pharaohs steward* should haue beene the meanes to bring the promise to passe, and after that, *Pharaohs butler*, hee vsed as a meanes, hee desired him to remember him, and yet all this was not the meanes, but another, which hee never thought of, which was a dreame of *Pharaohs*: the like was in the case of *Mordecai*, deliverance came a strange way, a way that *Mordecai* never imagined. *Abraham* thought verily that *Ismael* had beene the sonne of the promise, but God tells him hee was deceived, *Isaac* was the sonne, in whom he would make good the promise. So the *Israelites* thought that *Moses* should haue delivered them, that it shoulde haue beene presently true, that the yoake of bondage should haue presently beene taken off from them, but, wee see, God went another way to worke, hee sent *Moses* away, into a farre Country, and the bondage was exceedingly increased vpon them: so that they thought they were further off now then ever they were before, but, in truth, they were nearer: for the increase of the bondage, increased *Pharaohs* sinne, and made him ripe for destruction: againe, it increased the peoples humility, it made them to pray harder, and to cry more fervently to God for deliverance, and so it made them more fit for it;

*Note well.*

and

We attribute  
too much to  
meanes,

and at the last, *Moses* was more fitted to be a deliverer, after hee was so long trained vp, and was so much humbled; so that when *God* seems to goe a cleane contrary way, yet it is the next way, to bring it to passe. *Beloved*, it is a common thing with vs, we pitch vpon a certaine particular meanes, we think such a man must doe it, or such a course must doe it, when the *Lord* intends nothing lesse. And the reason often is, because, if we should haue deliverance, many times, by such meanes, by such men, and by such wayes, wee would attribtue too much to the meanes: therefore, we see, when *Gedor* had a great army, the *Lord* would not doe it, it was too great for him; and therefore we see to what a small number he brought it: so, oft times, men thinke, oh if I had such a mans helpe, or if I had such a meanes, it would doe the thing, it would bring the enterprise to passe: when we make too much account of it, the *Lord*, it may be, casts away that, which seemed most probable, and (even as he doth most of his works, as he builds his owne Kingdome, by the most foolish, and improbable meanes of all other, so) often he doth our busynesse by such meanes, that wee least dreame of: therefore be not discouraged. Suppose we pray, that such a great Prince should raise the Churches, that such a warre, that such an enterprize, and project may doe it; put the case the *Lord* will not doe it so; are wee then presently vanquished? and is there no helpe, because such a battaile

battaile is overthrowne, because such a King did not succeede, because such a Generall had not succeſſe, according to our expectation? It may bee, that is not the way, the L O R D will helpe the Church after another manner, that we dreame not of; and ſo for a mans ſelfe, he hath buſineſſe to be done, or hee is in diſtrefſe, and would haue deliverance, and hee thinkes, this is the way, or none; and therefore hee is earnest to haue it done: now it is good, in this caſe, to leauē it to the L O R D, to make our requeſts knowne to him; and, when wee haue done that, to be no further carefull, but leauē it to the L O R D, to doe it his owne way: hee is ſkilfull.

If you take a ſkilfull workeman, and ſay no more to him but thus: Sir, I pray you, doe mee ſuch a thing, if it were the bringing of water, or the ſetting vp of a building, it may bee, hee will goe a way to worke, that thou knoweft not what it meaneſs, and yet thou wilt truſt him: why then wilt thou not truſt G o d, and ſuffer him to goe his owne way? and when thou art crossed in that thing, wherein, it may be, of all others, thou wouldeſt not be crossed, it may be, it is the beſt way of all other, to bring the thing to paſſe, that thou deſireſt.

Againe, as wee are deceipted in the manner, and the meaneſs, ſo likewiſe wee miſtake the time: it may be the L O R D is willing to doe the thing, but not in that time, that thou wouldeſt

*Simile.**Thirdly, or not  
in our time.*

## Simile.

Wee must not  
take Gods de-  
lays for deni-  
alls,

## Note.

Why God de-  
fers to an-  
swer us.

## Note.

dest haue him: when a man prayes to be deli-  
vered from such a trouble, and such a distresse,  
and affliction, hee thinkes the time very long,  
and faith, hee is not heard, because hee is not  
delivered presently; wee would all haue the  
smarting plaister presently tooke off; but the  
L O R D is wiser then wee, (as the phisitian  
knowes what belongs to the patient better then  
himselfe) though hee doe it not presently, yet  
hee will doe it: therefore say not, thou art not  
heard, thou must take heede of taking delayes  
for denials, the L O R D will deferre to doe the  
thing, yet hee will doe it, and doe it in the best  
seafon: for this is a generall rule, *Gods time is  
the best time.* When thou commest to pray for  
a thing, thou wouldest haue it done presently,  
and thou thinkest it is the best time, all the con-  
troversie betweene G o d, and thee is, which  
is the fittest time to haue it done, thou think-  
est, it may be, presently; G o d, it may be, will  
doe it a yare hence; surely hee is the best choo-  
ser, and wee shall finde it so: and therefore  
bee content to waite his leisure; hee hath many  
ends, in deferring it, it may be, to try thy faith,  
(as hee did the faith of the C A N A A N I T E )  
and therefore hee would not heare; it may be to  
increase thy holinessse, to put thy heart into a  
better temper, and therefore he defers longer:  
hee meant to doe that for I A C O B, that hee did,  
yet he suffered I A C O B to *wrastle all night*, and yet  
hee would not doe it, till the instant of the mor-  
ning appeared: so it was with D A N I E L, the an-  
swere

swere went forth when hee began to pray, yet  
hee would haue him instant, and continue in  
prayer; so, I say, the L o r d hath many ends why  
hee deferres, let vs be content to take his owne  
time.

Last of all, consider this, when thou lekest to  
the L o r d, to haue any thing done, it is possi-  
ble, that it may crosse some other paſſage of his  
providence; and in this case thou shouldest bee  
content to be denied.

But, you will say, why may not both be ac-  
commodated?

I answere, so they shall, though thou see not  
how; it is not with G o d, as it is with man: if  
a man doe a good turne to one, when two be-  
come petitioners, hee must needles doe an ill  
turne to another, but G o d composeth all for  
the best. As for example, D a v i d desired much  
to build a Temple, the L o r d had another end,  
hee had resolved in his providence, to make  
S a l o m o n the builder of it: indeede this was  
much better for D a v i d, for what more had  
D a v i d gotten, if he had done it? the L o r d  
gaue him as full a reward, as if hee had done it:  
for hee tells him, that for that purpose of buil-  
ding him a houle, he would build him a house:  
so D a v i d had his end, to the full, though  
S a l o m o n built the Temple. So for I s r a e l,  
the L o r d kept the C a n a a n i t e s among  
them, but it was for their profit: there are ſome  
paſſages of G o d's providence, that if wee  
knew,

4. Anſw.  
Our prayers  
may crosse  
ſome paſſage  
of Gods pro-  
vidence.

Obiect.

Anſw.

Simile.

knew, wee wold yeeld to this, that it were better, that it should bee so, then otherwise ; and therefore it is better, in some case, that we should bee denied.

So much for this time.

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FINIS.

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THE



## THE THIRD SERMON.

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1 THESS. 5. 17.

*Pray continually.*



Ow. wee proceede to that which remaines , something more wee might adde, for the answering of this, for the time of G o d s granting our petitions, and for the measure, we touched it the last day a little.

For the time, wee are deceived ; in that wee thinke, when G o d deferres, he denies; for many times G o d deferres for speciall reasons, and yet he grants the request, in the fitteſt time for vs, as the phyſitian knoweth the fitteſt time to giue the patient phyſicke of one kinde or another; and in this

*See pag. 59.*

*Simile.*

this wee must yeeld to G o d ; as he doth all his workes in the fittest time, so he grants our petitions in the fittest time ; there is an appointed time for any deliverance to be granted, for any blessing, for any comfort, that we neede, and haue at his hands. Now, if our selues were judges, wee would haue things done for vs in the most convenient time, we would haue the smarting plaister pulled off, before the wound bee healed, whereas it is best for vs to haue it kept on: Beloved, you shall finde, that G o d divides betweene Sathan, and vs, in this case, as we see Rev. 2.10. *Sathan shall cast some of you into prison, and you shall be there for ten dayes:* it was not so long as Sathan would haue had it, it may be, he would haue had it ten and ten too ; nor againe, it was not so short, as they would haue had it, but G o d sets downe the time betweene them both, and therefore we must rest vpon him, and thinke that many times there is great reason, why we should be deferred, when wee aske things at his hands, and you shall finde he deferrers for one of these caules, for the most part.

Foure reasons  
of Gods defer-  
ring to grant  
our requests.

I  
To try our  
faith.

Sometimes, for the tryall of our faith; as, wee see, he deferred to grant to the woman of Canaan, although he did meane to grant her request, yet hee deferred long, that hee might put her to the tryall ; and you see, she was no looser by it, but when she held out in her prayers, she had her request granted to the full.

2  
To humble vs  
more.

Sometimes, hee deferrers to grant it, that wee may be more humbled; as you know, Paul prayed earnestly,

earnely, but God tolde him, that he would deferre him, because he needed more humility : so he deferred to grant the request, that the men of Israel put vp to him, when the cause was just, and God intended to helpe them, yet they fell before their enemies twicke, though they fasted, and prayed, his end was, as we see in the text, that they might be more humbled, that their hearts might be more broken, that they might be more fitted to receive it.

Againe, sometimes God defers, that we might bee more able to vse those blessings that hee meanes to bestow vpon vs : so hee deferred to raise Joseph to preferment: so he deferred to bring David to the Kingdome , that those afflictions that they endured might the better fit them to enjoy so great prosperity, as he had provided for them afterwards.

And lastly, he defers, that he might set a higher price vpon his blessings, that hee might inhaunce the price of them ; as the fisher drawes away the bait, that the fish might follow it the more ; so God withdraws blessings, that wee might haue a greater edge set vpon our desires, that we might pray harder for them, that wee might prize them more, when we haue obtained them.

Now, as he doth thus for the time, and as we are often deceived in the time, in taking delayes for denials ; so likewise wee are often deceived in the measure, many times God grants the things that wee would haue, but, because wee

3  
To inable vs to  
vse his bles-  
sings when we  
haue them.

4  
To make vs to  
prize his bles-  
sings.  
*Simile.*

Concerning  
the measure, if  
God give us  
not so much as  
weaske.

hath not so large a measure as we expect; therefore we thinke we haue it not at all, and that the L o r d hath denied vs our prayers, when indeed he hath not: for a lesser measure, many times, may serue as well as a greater; as G o d saith to Paul, *my grave is sufficient for thee*; though the temptation doe abide vpon vs, if there be sufficient grace to keepe vs in a continuall conflict, and warre against it, if there be sufficient grace to obtaine pardon, to vphold, and to comfort vs in it, it is sufficient, it may bring vs to heaven, we haue a deliverance from it, even when we seeme not to be delivered; though we haue not so full a victory, as we would haue, yet that grace may be sufficient.

A lesse measure  
may serue as  
well as a greater.

Cleared in instances.

1. Wealth.  
*Psal. 38. 16.*

You shall see this almost in all the things wee haue occasion to request, at G o d s hands, that a lesser measure may serue as well as a greater. Take it first in outward things.

A little wealth may serue, as well as great revenues; as in *Psal. 38. 16.* *A little that the righteous hath is as much as great revenues to the wicked*; because a little, when G o d shall fill it with his blessings, it shall serue the turne as well; but, if a man hath great revenues, and G o d blowes vpon them, and leaues an emptinesse in them; if a man haue great revenues, if hee haue great outward comforts, yet, if there be an emptinesse, if there be a vanity in them, if they be as the huske, without the graine, as the shell, without the kerne, as they are often; though there be a great bulke, and they seeme very fit to comfort vs, yet they

*Simile.*

they will doe vs little good; whereas a little, on the other side, will doe much good: for in this case it is as it was with *Manna*, those that had little, yet they had sufficient, and those that gathered over, yet they had never a whit the more, that is, for their vse and comfort; you know, the little that *Daniel* had, it nourished, and strengthened him, as much as the great portion of the Kings meate, that others had; and therefore a little, in this kind, may serue as well as much.

And so likewise, a little grace may be so vsed, and improved, that it may enable you to doe much; it may preserue you from sinning against G o d, as well as a great measure: for the confirmation of this looke to *Rev. 3. 8.* which is a notable place for this purpose, it is said there to the Church of *Philadelphia*, thou hast a little strength, they had but a little strength, and yet you see there what that little strength did: thou hast but a little strength, and yet thou hast kept my word; and hast not denied my name: there were but two things for them to doe, to keepe his word, and to be kept from running out to the deniall of his name, and other finnes: now the little strength they had, was sufficient for these ends: so that, wee see, hee finde no fault with that Church; other Churches, that had more strength, it may be, they fell into greater finnes: but this is a rule which is true, you will finde it true in all observation, through the Scriptures, that, sometimes, those that haue great grace, yet they may fall into great finnes, they may be subject

2. Instance in  
grace.

*Rev 3. 8.*

Those that  
haue more  
grace may fall,  
when weake  
ones stand.

to some strong prevailing lust; as *David*, you know, had a great grace, and yet, we see, he was subject to great sinnes together with it.

And againe, a man may haue but a little grace, and yet that little grace may be so ordered, and husbanded, and improved, that that little grace may keepe him from sinne, more then the other: this must be warily vnderstood, not but that great grace enables a man to doe greater workes, then the other, it enables a man, in the ordinary course, to resist greater temptations, more then lesse grace, but yet, (I say for our comfort, that) though a man haue but a little strength, yet, as it is said there in the same place, *Rev. 3.* in that little strength, *I haue set a doore open to thee*, it opened the doore of heaven wide enough, so that no man could shut it.

Note in what  
sense this is to  
be taken.

*Rev. 3.*

3 Instance in  
gifts.

• *Simile.*

*Simile.*

And as we say for grace, so likewise for gifts, smaller gifts, meaner gifts may serue the turne, many times, as well as greater gifts: for, you know, a little finger, a small hand may serue to thread a needle, as well as a greater, and, it may be, will doe it better; for, in the Church there are varieties of operations, and variety of funtions, and meaner gifts may serue for the discharge of some operations, of some services, for the Church, as well as greater. And therefore, as there are variety of funtions, so there are variety of members, some stronger, some weaker, and the weaker may serue, in some cases, as well as the stronger; a little barke may doe better in a small river, then a greater shipp; so a man that hath

hath but meane gifts may serue meane capacities, as well as greater, and better: and therefore thinke not that things are denied, when the thing is granted, not in such a measure. And lastly, to be faithfull in a little gift will bring as great a reward, as to be faithfull in greater: thou hast beeene faithfull in little, may make a man ruler over much, and may bring a great increase of the talents after. Therefore let not a man be discouraged, if he haue not so great a measure as others haue: so likewise if a man desire patience, and strength to goe through all variety of conditions, through all the troubles hee meetes with: sometimes the L O R D layes a great burthen vpon a mans shoulders, and giues him great strength to beare it; sometimes againe he giues but a little strength, but then he proportions the burthen to it; and is it not all one, whether the burthen be great, and the strength answerable, or the burthen be lesse, and the strength little? sometimes hee takes away calamity, sometimes hee layes it vpon a man, and giues him as much strength as will beare it, and that is as good, as if it were removed; else, what is the meaning of that, *you shall have an hundred fold with persecuti-*  
*on, but that you shall haue so much joy, and strength in persecution, that it shall be all one as if you wanted it:* so we see Heb. 5.7. when Christ prayed for deliverance, in that great houre of triall, the text saith, *hee was heard in the things he feared,* and yet, we see, the cup did not passe from him, because hee was strengthened to beare it,

Faithfaulſeſſe  
in little brings  
as great a re-  
ward as in  
more.

4. Instance, in  
crosses, and af-  
flictions.

Simile.

Heb. 5.7.

Note.

Dangers of  
omitting, or  
neglecting  
prayer.

1

2

3

4

5

6

Why men de-  
cline in their  
grace.

and so it is in this case: and so much shall serue for a full answere to that, that we be not mistaken in judgeing our prayers not to be heard, when they are heard.

And now, *Beloved*, what remaines, but that we set our selues to the duty, to doe that we are exhorted vnto here, namely, to *pray continually*, that is, to pray very much, to keepe, at least, a constant courfe in it; for, if we doe neglect it, we doe but robbe God of his mercies, wee take them without his leaue.

Againe, we are guilty of the sinne of vnthankfulness: for we ought to *give thankes in all things*: againe, wee neglect his worship; for you know prayer is a part of his worship, and the neglect of it from day to day, or at any time, when we omit it, is a neglect of that worship, and service we owe vnto him.

Againe, we suffer sin to lie vnforgiven, which is very dangerous, we deprive our selues of blessings, and bring a curse vpon our selues, and we suffer our hearts to grow hard, and to be distempered: for, from our neglect of prayer comes that deadnesse of spirit, that worldly-mindednesse, and vnaptnesse to pray, to heare the word, and to keepe the sabbath; what else is the reason of it, why those that haue beeene forward, and zealous professours, in former times, haue lost their light, and are fallen from their place; I say what is the reason of it, when they were sometimes *feruent in spirit serving the Lord*? That fire was not kept aliue with the fuell of prayer; and when

when they declin'd from that pitch, from that degree of faith, which they had obtained, you shall finde it commonly to arise from remisnesse in this duty: therefore wee say to such, *repent, and amend, and doe your first workes;* that is, vse your former diligence, renew that, and that will renew grace, and strength againe: therefore take heede of being negligent, and remisse in this duty. We haue great cause to be encouraged to it, for there is not a faithfull prayer that wee make shalbe lost; but they come vp into remembrance: and therefore you must consider with your selues, not onely what you doe for the present, but what stocke of prayers you haue laid vp, you know, a man may haue much in bills, and bonds, as well as in present money; so there is a certayne stocke of prayer, a certayne treasure laid vp, that shall not be forgotten. The husbandman lookes not onely vpon the graine that hee hath in his garner, but he lookes vpon that which is sowne, though it be out of his hand, yea he reckons that the better of the two; so those prayers that haue beene sowed, (it may be, many yeares agoe) are such as will bring in a sure increase: therefore let vs be exhorted to be constant in this duty, to be frequent therein; to continue in it, watching thereto with perseverance.

And now wee haue dispatched this, wee will come to answere some cases of conscience that fall out in the performance of this duty, which are divers.

First, this is one; what shall a man judge of his

Benefit of frequency, and diligence in prayer.

No faithfull prayer is lost.

*Simile.*

*Simile.*

Cases of conscience concerning prayer.

*Case. I.*

About wandring thoughts  
in prayer.

his prayers, when they are accompanied with wandring thoughts, whether those prayers are such as G o d wholly refuseth, or what he is to doe in such a case, when he is subject to wandring thoughts, to vanity of minde, and distemper in the performance of that duty?

*Ans<sup>r</sup>.*

I  
The cause of  
them is weak-  
nesse.

*Simile.*

To this I answeare, that wee must distinguish of the cause whence these wandring thoughts arise.

Sometimes theyarise, not so much from our owne negle&t, as from weakenesse, from temp-tation: and in such a case G o d layes them not so much to our charge. As, for example, one that aymes at a marke, and doth his best to hit the marke, yet, if he hath a hand, or an arme, hath the palsey in it, or if one jogg him wh<sup>t</sup> is about it, the fault was not so much in him, as want of good will to doe it, nor of diligence; but either it is his weakenesse, it is an impediment cast in by another: so this case, this wandring of minde proceedeth a naturall infirmity, and imbecillity, that lieth vpon the nature of man, which is not so able to keepe it selfe close to such a spirituall busynesse; and this God considers, for he is wise, and *knowes that we are but flesh*. When a weake servant goes about a busynesse, though hee doe it not so well as a stronger, yet a man is wise to consider, that the servant is but weake: the L o r d considers the naturall weakenesse that we are subject vnto; and he deales mercifully with vs, in such a case: for herein a man is as one that hath a bow in his hand,

*Simile.*

*Simile.*

hand, but he hath a palsey arme, and therefore he cannot keepe it steddy, though he haue a mind to doe it.

But the other case is, when he is jogged in his shooting by another, that is, when Sathan interrupis him, when hee is diligent to hinder him in such a duty, in this case, G o d chargeth it not vpon him, and doth not cast vs off, nor reject our prayers, because of that: but, on the other side, when this wandring of minde shall rise from meere negligence, on our part, from profanesse, from want of reverence, because we doe not intend holy duties as we ought, wee come not to them with that consonablenesse, with that carefulnesse as we should doe; in this case now, it is a great sinne, this moues the L o r d to anger, when we performe the duty in that manner, when wee doe not so much as set our selues about it with our strength, but suffer our mindes to wander without any resistance.

Or secondly, when we our selues be the cause of it by admitting of loose thoughts, by suffering our selues to be worldly minded, by suffering an indisposition to grow vpon vs, and not labouiring to resist it, and cast it off againe. You know, when an instrument is out of tune, if the lesson be never so good, that is played vpon it, yet it is vnpleasant, because the instrument is out of tune, and whose fault is that? so, when thou commest to G o d, and sufferest thy heart to be distempered before, and doest not looke to keepe it in order, that is thy sinne, as well as thy profanesse, and

2. Temptation.

3. Negligence,

4. Voluntary  
admitting of  
vaine thoughts

Sinske.

About wandring thoughts  
in prayer.

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*Simile.*

Sometimes theyarise, not so much from our owne neglect, as from weakenesse, from temptation: and in such a case G o d layes them not so much to our charge. As, for example, one that aymes at a marke, and doth his best to hit the marke, yet, if he hath a hand, or an arme, that hath the palsey in it, or if one jogg him while he is about it, the fault was not so much in him, it was not want of good will to doe it, nor want of diligence; but either it is his weakenesse, or it is an impediment cast in by another: so it is in this case, this wandring of minde proceeds from a naturall infirmity, and imbecillity, that hangs vpon the nature of man, which is not so able to keepe it selfe close to such a spirituall busynesse; and this G o d considers, for he is wise, and *knowes that we are but flesh.* When a weake servant goes about a busynesse, though hee doe it not so well as a stronger, yet a man is wise to consider, that the servant is but weake: the L o r d considers the naturall weakenesse that we are subject vnto; and he deales mercifully with vs, in such a case: for herein a man is as one that hath a bow in his hand,

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2. Temptation.

3. Negligence.

4. Voluntary  
admitting of  
vaine thoughts

Sinnes.

How to prevent wandering thoughts in prayer.

*Simile.*

*Case. 2.*  
About indisposition, & dulness, & vnaptness to prayer.

*Answe. I.*

*Object.*  
*Answe.*

and negle<sup>c</sup>t in the very time of the performance: and, by this you may learne, how to judge of wandring thoughts in the performance of this duty, and likewise you may see how to prevent them: the way to prevent them, is to keepe our hearts in tune before, to haue them ready, as *the w<sup>i</sup>s<sup>e</sup> man hath his heart at his right hand*, that is, he hath it ready when he hath it to vse. When a man is to vse his horse, he doth not suffer him to runne vp and downe in the pastures wildly, but will haue him vnder bridle; so we should keepe our hearts in frame, that they may be ready to doe vs service in such a holy dutie, when wee haue neede of them.

Secondly, we must be diligent, when we come to performe the duty, that, though our mindes doe wander, yet we may be ready to recall them presently, to set our selues to it with all diligence: so much for answering of this first case.

The second case is, what a man is to doe, when hee findes a great indisposition to prayer, such a dulnesse, and deadnesse in him, that hee knowes not how to goe about the dutie, and hee thinkes, if he doe it, it were as good be vndone.

To this I answer briefly, that in all such cases, a man is bound notwithstanding to performe it, let his heart be never so much out of temper, let there be never so great a dulnesse, and deadnesse of spirit vpon him, yet he is bound to doe it.

But you wil say, why, but I am altogether vnsit. I answere, that a man by setting himselfe vpon the

the worke, shall gather a fitnesse, though he were vnfit at the first: you know, members, that are benummed, yet by vsing them, they get life, and heate, and come, in the end, to be nimble enough; so it is with the heart, in this case, when it is benummed, the very vsing of it makes it fit for the duty. You know, wood, though it be greene, yet, if it be long blowed, at the length, it will be dry, and take fire, so it is with the heart, a man may be long about getting it on the wing, yet, with much adoe, he may doe it; and therefore he ought to doe this duty, in such a case; yea so much the rather, because there is never more need of calling vpon G o d, then at such a time: for then a man lyes most exposed to temptation, then, if any sinne come, hee is ready to be overtaken with it, he is vnfit for any thing, and therefore, if ever he haue need to call vpon G o d, it is at that time.

But you will say, it may be, G o d will not accept it?

I answer briefly, although a mans heart be so indisposed, that, when he hath done all he can, yet he can get no life, hee can get no heate in the performance of such a duty, yet G o d may accept that prayer, as well as that which is most fervent. And that you may vnderstand this aright, you must take it with this distinction.

This dulnesse, and deadnesse in prayer, it comes from one of these two causes.

One is, when G o d withdrawes his owne spirit, that is, withdrawes not his spirit altogether; (for

*Simile.**Simile.*

Never more  
need to pray,  
then when wee  
are most indis-  
posed.

*Note.**Object.**Ans<sup>w</sup>. 2.*

Causes of dul-  
nesse.

1. Deser<sup>t</sup>ion.

(for there may be a helpe, when wee perceiue it not)but when he withdrawes the liuelynesse, and quicknesse of his spirit, and in this case, if we doe our duty, if we doe the best we can, the Lord doth accept it, though hee hath not vouchsafed such enlargement of our hearts, though he haue not powred out his spirit vpon vs, in the performance of the dutie, as at other times, but he giues a secret helpe, that perhaps we feele not, nor perhaps is so great as at other times; yet I say, when it ariseth from his owne withdrawing of that fitnesse, and we are not negligent, which is the other cause, I say, when we are not negligent, but we doe our best, in this case, God accepts the will for the deed, as we haue often said to you:that rule alway holds good, when the impediment is such as we cannot remoue, when the dulnesse of spirit is such as it is not in our power to remoue, when we haue vsed our vtmost diligence, in that case it is no hindrance: and therefore it is a great comfort vnto vs, that we haue vsed our diligence in this duty, when we haue vsed our best to quicken our hearts, though it be not done, yet God accepts our prayers, as well as if they were performed in a more lively and fervent manner.

3. From neg-  
ligence.

When indispo-  
sition is no  
hindrance.

*Case. 3.*  
About praying  
after a man  
hath commit-  
ted some grosse  
sinne.

The next case is, what a man is to doe after he hath committed some great sinne, after he hath wounded his conscience, whether then notwithstanding hee must come, and keepe his constant course in prayer, morning, and evening, whether he shall be so bold, as to come into God's presence after he hath so exceedingly offended him.

To

To this I answere, that a man is bound, ( notwithstanding any sinne that hee hath committed, be it what it will be ) to keepe his course constantly in prayer, and not to omit it, not to keepe off, not to deferre it. And my ground for it is, because this is a duty, it is a charge, that God hath layed vpon all, to *pray continually*; that is, at the least twice a day, as we shewed before, to keepe a constant course in it. Now, it is certaine, our failing in one thing, must not excuse vs in another: when the dutie lyes on vs, wee haue no dispensation to be negligent in it; and therefore we are bound to doe it.

Againe, consider this, that a particular offence doth not offend so much, as if we grow strangers to God; is if we grow to a generall rebellion against him. As, put the case, a childe commits a great offence against his father, yet, if he runne away from his fathers house, and grow a stranger to him, that is more then the particular offence: for a generall rebellion must needs be more then the particular, and to give over calling vpon God, to break off that course, to grow a stranger to him, to runne away from his house, and (as it were) to be ready to give over all his ordinances, & a constant course of obedience to him, this is a general rebellion, & is worse then the particular; yea such carriage, after sin committed, moues God to anger more then the sin it selfe; as, many times, the contempnous, negligent, rebellious carriage, after an offence, moues a master, a husband, or a parent more, then the particular failing though it were exceeding great.

*Answ.*  
In this case  
prayer is not to  
be neglected.

*1. Reas.*  
It is Gods com-  
mand.

*Note.*

*2. Reas.*  
Neglect in this  
is worse then  
the sinne wee  
committed be-  
fore.

Be-

3. *Reas.*

It leaves the  
breach in the  
conscience o-  
pen.

Besides, consider, when a man commits a great sinne, he makes a great gap in his conscience, he makes a great breach there; and will you haue that breach lye open? is not that very dangerous? is not that the way to bring in more sinne, and to suffer those good things that are in the heart to steale out? I will giue you but one instance for this: You see, *S. Peter*, when he had committed a great sinne, in denying his Master, and forswearing of him too, yet, because he came in presently, and repented, and sought pardon, (as you know hee did) you see, hee was preserved from running into further arrerages: for hee made vp the gappe, hee made vp the breach.

If wee recover  
not quickly  
out of a sinne,  
we adde more  
to it.

Wee see, on the other side, when *David* had committed that sinne with *Bathsheba*, and did not come vnto *God*, as hee should haue done, to keepe his constant course in sacrificing vnto him, in repenting, and renewing his repentance, and praying to him, you know, how many sinnes he fell into: and likewise, that was the case of *Salomon*, you know, to what a height hee grew, by not comming to *God*, at his first failing: and therfore, I say, there is reason, that we should doe it, though the sinne be great, wee ought to come in, and to keepe our course constantly.

*Quest.*

But may I not stay till I be more fitted, till my heart be more softened, and more humbled?

*Answ.*

Beloved, to stay in this case is dangerous, for

the heart commonly growes more hard in continuance ; the conscience is more tender, immediately after the sinne is committed , then it is afterwards ; and when thou stayest for more humility , thou findest lesse ; and therefore, while the wound is greene, and when the fire hath taken newly holde, it is then best to quench it, before the wound be festered, before it hath continued long ; for the heart will grow worse, and worse, as it is *Heb. 3. 12.* Take heede that you be not hardened through the deceitfulnesse of sinne ; the meaning is this , when you commit a sinne , you thinke, if you stay a weeke, or a fortnight, or a moneth, you shall come in as wel as at the first; no, saith the Apostle, *while it is to day*, come in, that is, doe it presently, for sinne will deceiue you, it will harden your heart before you be aware, it will make a distance betweene God, and you, it will take you off from him, it will leade you further on ; and therefore take heede, that your hearts be not hardened through the deceitfulnesse of sinne, that sinne doe not deceiue you, and it will doe it before you thinke of it : and therefore in this case you should doe as you doe with waters, when waters breake out a little, it is best to stop them presently ; if you suffer them, they will make the breach greater, till at length, you be vnable to stop them : so in this case, when you haue committed a great sin, come in speedily .

But you will say, what shall a man come into Gods presence, who is most holy, after he hath defiled

Staying for sinnes after sin committed, we become more unfit.

*Heb 3. 12.*

Simile.

Obiect.

filled himselfe with some great sinne, is not this an vnreverent thing?

*Answe.*

We must come  
to God with a  
disposition tur-  
ned from sin.

I answer briefly, it is very true, if thou be bold to come into GOD's presence with the same disposition wherewith the sin was committed, with a minde so fashioned, and so framed, in that case thou doest exceedingly provoke him, this is a very high degree of profanesse: and therefore, when we say, thou must come in, and keepe a constant course in prayer notwithstanding, the meaning is, you must come in with a disposition turned aside from your finnes, and brought home to GOD, with a minde to abhorre that which is evill, and to cleave to that which is good; there must bee this conversion of the minde to him, thou must not come in with the same disposition, that must be altered. So much shall serue for the answe to this case.

*Cafe. 4.*  
About a set  
forme of praier

*Answe.*

Another case is, whether wee may vse a set forme of prayer? and likewise whether it be sufficient?

I neede not say much to you, for I thinke there is none here that doubt of it, but that a set forme of prayer may be vsed: you know, CHRIST pre-scribed a forme, you know, there were certaine Psalmes that were prayers, that were vsed constantly; and therefore there is no doubt but that a set forme may be vsed, wee haue that example for it: And in the Church, at all times, in the primatiue times of the Church, and all along to the beginning of the reformed times, to Luther, and Calvins time, still, in all times, the Church had

had set formes they vsed, and I know no objection against it of weight. One maine objection is this :

That in stinted prayer the spirit is straitned, when a man is tyed to a forme, then hee shall haue his spirit, as it were, bounded, and limited, that hee cannot goe beyond that which is prescribed, and therefore, say they, it is reason a man should be left to more libertie, (as hee is in conceived prayers) and not tyed to a strict forme.

To this I answere, even those men, that are against this, and that vse this reason, they doe the same thing daily in the congregation: for when another prayes, that is a set forme to him, that heares it, I say, it is a forme to him: for put that case, that he that is a hearer, that heares as other pray, suppose that his spirit be more enlarged, it is a straitning to him, hee hath no liberty to goe out; he is bound to keepe his minde intent vpon it: and therefore, if that were a sufficient reason, that a man might not vse a set form, because the spirit is straitned, a man should not heare another pray(though it be a conceived prayer) because, in that case, his spirit is limited; it may be, the hearer hath a larger heart, a great deale, then hee that speakes and prayes; so that there is a bounding, and straitning, and a limiting of the spirit. And therefore that reason cannot be good.

Againe, I answere, though the spirit be limited, at that time, yet he hath a libertie, at other

G times,

*Object.*

*Answ. 1.*  
I hose that ob-  
iect against a  
set forme of  
prayer, doe the  
same thing.

*Note.*

*Answ. 2.*  
We haue liber-  
tie at other  
times.

times, to pray as freely as he will in private; and therefore he is not so tyed, but, though, at that time he be, yet it is no generall tye; at another time, or immediately after, he may be as free as he will in secret.

*3. Answ.*  
The spirit is not  
restrained in a  
set forme of  
prayer.

Againe, I answere, it is not a tye, and a restraint of the spirit, because there is a tye of words; for the largenesse of the heart stands not so much in the multitude and variety of expressions, as in the extent of the affection: now then the heart may be very large, for all that; though he be tyed in words, yet there is not a tye vpon the affection, that may be extended more, in putting vp the same petition, when another mans is more straitned; therefore there is no tye, and limit vpon that. And this is enough to satisfie that that a set forme of prayer must be vsed.

*Ques<sup>t</sup>.*

But now, if you aske, whether that be sufficient: whether a man may think, if hee haue beene present at publique prayer, (which is a commendable thing to vse constantly) I say, whether that be sufficient?

*Answ.*  
Though a set  
forme may be  
vsed in prayer,  
yet that alone  
is not suffici-  
ent.

My Beloved, this is a matter of some moment, to consider what we ought to doe in this case; for we may be deceived in it, and I answer plainly, it is not sufficient: a man that is diligent in publique prayers, that keepes them morning and evening, if hee thinkes now he hath discharged his duty, he is in a very great error: and this is the reaſon, because they are not ſufficient. Indeed, they are to be vsed; for God is worshipped in them, and it is a more publique worship; and when

when G o d is honoured before many (as a man, when there are many spectators, more honour is done to him) it is a greater honour; so it is when men joyne in this worship. And many other reasons there be, but that is not the thing, I am now vpon, to commend it to you; but, I say, it is not sufficient, although it ought to be done, because there are many particular sinnes, which cannot be confessed in publique prayer, there are many particular wants, which in publique prayer you cannot vnfold, and open, and expresse vnto the L O R D .

Againe, the end of a set forme of prayer is to be a helpe for the private, (for the publique it is another case) a helpe that one may vse that is yet exceeding weake: a childe, that cannot goe, may haue such a proppe, but wee must not alway be children, we must not alway vse that helpe.

Besides, we must consider this, that there is no man, that hath any worke of grace in his heart, but he is inabled in some measure to pray, without a set forme of prayer, he is able to expresse his desires to G o d in private, one way, or an other: there was never any man, in any extreme want, but he knew how to expresse himselfe, where he had libertie to speake: so it is in this case.

Besides, the spirit of a man hath greater liberty in private; there a man may *powre forth his soule to the Lord*, as *Hanna saith*, *1 Sam. 1.* which in publique, he cannot doe freely: there are many particular mercies, which hee hath cause to be thankfull to G o d for.

*Simile.*

5. Reasons pro-  
ving that a set  
forme of pray-  
er is not suffi-  
cient.

1. Reas.

2. Reas.

*Simile.*

3. Reas.

4. Reas.

*1 Sam. 1.*

5. *Reas.*The end why  
prayer is vied.*Cafe. 5.*  
About vsing  
the voice, and  
about the ge-  
sture in secret  
prayer.*Answ.*

Besides, there is a particular paines that a man is to take with his heart, from day to day, which, in the publike common petitions, he is not able to doe: for Beloved, know this, that the prayer, that is required from day to day, is not so much the performance of the duty, the doing of the taske, but the end is to keepe the heart in order; for, if sinfull lust grow vpon it, and distempers, and worldly mindednesse, the end of this duty is to worke them out againe, to renew repentance againe; and, when there is a forgetfulnesse of the covenant, when grace growes weake, when good desires begin to languish, to renew, and recover them, to put fuell to them: and this is not done by the performance of the publike only; and therefore, I say, though you performe it in your families, and meete in the congregatiōn, you must not thinke that this is enough, you are bound to a private performance of this duty.

Againe, this is another case, what a man is to doe in the private performance of this duty, whether he be bound alwayes to vse his voice? whether he be bound alwayes to vse such a kinde of gesture?

I answer this briefly, (for there is no great difficulty in these things, and therefore I passe them over) for the gesture in publike, there is more heede to be taken of that, because it is a publike and open worship of G o d; and therefore in publike the gesture is alway to be reverent. You know how often it is repeated, (in the olde te-  
stament

stament especially ) that they *bowed downe*, and worshipped still, Christ looked vp to heaven, Paul kneeled downe, and the rest with him, and prayed, and many such like expressions you haue mentioned in the Scriptures: where you haue prayer mentioned in publike, still you shall finde an expression of soime reverend gesture, and when we appeare before the L O R D in the publike performance of this dutie, especiall care must be taken hereunto: in the private, the case is different; there variety of gestures may be vsed; I doe not see, but all variety of gestures may be vsed; there are many examples for *walking*, and *lying*, and *sitting*; onely this is to bee taken heede to, that, even in private, as farre as may be, the gesture be such, as may both expresse the inward reverence in the heart, and of the outward man; but there is a libertie in that: I thinke this is the best rule in private, that the gesture be vsed, that doth most quicken, and doth help the dutie most. Some gesture may bring a dulnesse, and indisposition, when another may quicken the body, and make it more fit for prayer: sometimes lying is inconvenient, and sometimes more convenient; and therefore, in this case, the best rule is, to vle that gesture, which quickens most, which helpes most the duty: some gestures may breed a wearines in the body, some may breed a dulnesse; some are painfull to the body: all this is a hindrance to the duty, when the change of it may quicken and helpe.

Now for the voyce, I say, for that, (as for the  
G 3 gesture)

Note.

That gesture is  
to be vsed in  
private prayer  
that doth most  
quicken.

Ioh 4. 24.

Angels how  
they speake to  
God and one  
another.

Why the voice  
is vfed in pra-  
yer.

gesture) it is not simply requyred: for *God is a spirit, and he will be worshipped in spirit*: men, that haue eares, and bodies, they must haue men speak to them, but *God, that is a spirit, delights in that which is like himselfe*; and therefore all his eye is vpon the inward behaviour of the spirit. Besides, the spirit may speake to *G o d*, when the voice doth not, as, you know, the *Angells* speake to *G o d*, and they speake one to another. The Schoolemen haue great disputes about the speech of *Angels*, but this they agree in, that one *Angel* speakes to another after this manner; when any one hath a conceit, in his mind, of any thing, with a will that another should vnderstand it, and that *God* should vnderstand it, that is enough for the expression of it; so is it with the spirit of a man, when he hath such a petition in his heart, in his minde, and there is a desire in his will, that *G o d* should vnderstand that petition; that is an offering it vp to the *L o r d*, it is as true a speaking to the *L o r d*, as when you deliver it by an outward voyce for the spirit agrees with the *Angels*; as it is a spirit, and as they speake one to another: and to the *L o r d*, so doth the spiriit of man, though, indeede, the tongue be to be vse d, as it is, *Iam. 3. 9. therewith bleſſe wee God*; and therewith should we pray among others, and before others, and speake before others: but when there is any cause to vſe the voyce, in private, it is this, as farre as it may quicken the heart, (as I said of gesture) and as farre as thereby we may keepe our thoughts from wandring. If the voice were

were not vsed, perhaps, the thoughts would be subject to more wandring, and we should not be ready to take notice of them, but they would slip before we are aware: and therefore, when the voyce is vsed, it must bee to keepe in the thoughts. In some cases, to omit the voice, is more convenient when it may draw any other inconvenience, but that is left to every mans particular case, as he shall finde the vse of it to hinder him, or further him. And so much shall serue for this Case.

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FINIS.

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G 4 THE



THE  
FOURTH  
SERMON.

I THESS. 5. 17.

*Pray continually.*

*Case. 6.*  
About want of  
leasure to pray  
by reason of  
present busi-  
nesses to bee  
speedily dis-  
patched.



Nother case of Consciencee in the businesse of prayer, is what a man is to doe, when hee is in strait of time, by reason of some waughty businesse, that requires a quicke and fudden dispatch, and giues him not the leasure and liberty, that otherwise he might haue had?

To this I answer, you shall finde, that in Scriptures, the prayers of Saints haue beeene sometimes larger, and sometimes shorter. Our Saviour Christ, you know, sometimes spent a whole night

night in prayer; Surely he did not take so much time alwayes, and, no doubt, wee haue libertie sometimes to be larger, sometimes shorter, according as our occasions will permit. But yet this you must remember, that though the buyfinesse be great, yet that buyfinesse, that concernes the salvation of our soules, and the worship of G o d, is greater: And therefore, except it be a true strait, this is still to be preferred; for it is a buyfinesse of greater moment; and therefore you must giue a just weight to your businesse, and not suffer every small businesse that comes in to thrust out this dutie: for here you keepe not the due proportion, but negleēt the greater, and take the lesse.

Besides, doe you not say, when you haue great businesse in hand, that a man muſt haue a dining time, and a sleeping time, &c. Why may wee not say as well: a man muſt haue a praying time; is it not as necessary? You know what *Job* saith, you know the course that he kept in reading the word, (for that is cleerely meant in that place) *It was more precious to him then his appoynted foode:* that is, he had rather omit his vſuall meales, (for that he meanes by his appointed food) then to omit a constant course in performing those holy duties. Therefore, I say, it ought carefully to be tooke heede of, that wee omit it not, except it be a very great strait, if it be, wee may be ſhort in it, G o d tyes vs not ſo exactly you ſee therein, rules are not ſet downe in the Scriptures, wherein we are tyed precisely to ſuch an houre, to ſuch

Matters concer-  
ning salvation  
to be preferred  
before outward  
businesse.

Wee ſhould  
allot time for  
prayer, as well  
as for other bu-  
ſinesſe.

Cautions about shortnes  
of prayer in  
such straits.

I Caution.  
Husband time  
well two  
ways.

I

2

a time , but GOD , in mercy , and in wisedome ,  
hath left it to our libertie : onely , you see , this is  
the command , *pray continually* , doe it exceeding  
much , at the least , keepe a constant course , in it ,  
as wee heard before , but you may bee shorter  
in it .

Now let these fwe Cautions be observed .

First , take heede that this straitning come  
not from your ill husbandry , that is , from your  
ill husbanding of time , for , if a man were care-  
full to redeeme time before , it may be , he neede  
not be putto such a strait , as hee is at that time ,  
when he is to performe this duty : suppose you  
haue a journey to goe , that requyres so much  
time , and you must be gone carely , you may so  
husband the time before , that you may get time  
for your journey . And for the performance of  
this duty , and so for other businesse , as I said in  
the morning , when you should sequester your  
selues to performe this duty of prayer , take heede  
that you be good stewards of your time , that  
you husband it well .

And likev.ise , this is another part of husban-  
ding your time , that you let not that , which is  
very pretious , goe for things of small moment ,  
for that is ill husbandry . You should redeeme  
the time , and buy it with the losse of somthing .  
You haue time to bestow in the waighty bu-  
sinesse of your calling , in things that belong to  
the good of man , much more should you in this  
that belongs to the worship of GOD : And there  
fore , if it may be , redeeme it with some losse ; so  
you

you ought to husband it, otherwise you redeeme not time as you ought. This is the first Caution that ought to be obserued, to husband and redeeme the time well.

The second is, if we be straitned at any time, recompence it at another time: for if it be not a feigned excuse and pretence, if you be straitned, when you haue libertie, you will be carefull to spend more time in it; by that you shall know your sinceritie in it, that it is true, and that it is not an excuse, and a putting off.

Moreover, another Caution to be obserued is, that you take not too much businesse vpon you: if you be straitned with businesse, and therefore cannot be so large in the performance of this dutie, as otherwise you would, if you did not take so much vpon you, your selues are the cause of it. And therfore, he that takes lesse, he that spends more time in the things that belong to salvation, he hath made the better choise; as *Mary* made a better choise then *Martha*, though her imployment were good.

Likewise, as you must not pester your selues with too much businesse, so likewise you must take care, that your mindes be not too much intent vpon them, for too much intention of minde vpon businesse, causeth distraction in prayer, and causeth vs to post over the dutie, as well as too much businesse: when a mans minde shoothes it selfe too farre in businesse, when it is too much occupied about it, when it is too much intent, when the soule cleaves too fast vpon the businesse,

2. *Caution.*  
Recompence it  
another time.

3. *Caution.*  
Take heede of  
too much bu-  
sinessse.

4. *Caution.*  
Be not too in-  
tent vpon bu-  
sinessse.

and

*s. Caution.*  
Looke to the  
ground of the  
straite.

*Case. 7.*  
About vse of  
the meanes.

*Answe.*  
Reasons why  
meanes must  
be vsed.

Else our de-  
sires are not  
good.

and cannot loose it selfe to the performance of spirituall duties , which require freedome.

The last Caution is , that the strait rise not from diffidence in G o D , and confidence in the vse of the meanes ; for , it falles out oft times when wee haue busynesse of moment in hand , there is a turning , and posting from one creature to another , from the vse of one meanes to another , that wee cannot get time in prayer , not so much for want of time simply , but because wee minde the meanes too much , we intend them too much , wee doe not trust G o D enough with the busynesse , if we did ; we might spend lesse time in them , and more in seeking to him . So much for that case .

Another Case of Conscience in this busynesse of calling vpon G o D is , what a man is to doe for the vse of the meanes , for when wee are bid to pray , and seeke to G o D , that is the ordinary question ; But may wee not vse the meanes to ?

To this I answere , That prayer is so farre from excluding the meanes , that it includes them ; for , if the desire be fervent , when we desire any thing at G o D s hands , it will make vs diligent in the vse of the meanes , to vse a convenient diligence , as it will make you earnest in seeking to G o D , and in putting vp your requests to him : for , if a man shall pray , and bee negligent in the vse of the meanes , I wiil be bold to say it , it is but like the desire of the sluggard , that is a languishing , fainting desire : Hee desires , but his

his soule hath nothing ; hee desires, but he puts his hand into his bosome : the desires, which you expresse, when you pray, they are not fervent, they are not earnest, if you be remisse in the vse of the meanes. Hee that desires grace, desires strength, against sinfull lusts, and temptation, and yet is remisse in the vse of the meanes, by which grace should be increased, and strength gained, to resist those corruptions, and temptations ; certainly his desires are but vaine desires.

Besides, it is an argument that wee trust not in G o d , that wee make not accompt of our prayers, except we be diligent in the vse of the meanes ; therefore we are farre from excluding them : for, if you seeke to G o d , and trust to your prayers, and thinke that they will preuale with him, it will worke this effect, that you will be carefull to vse such meanes , as G o d hath ordeined to bring the thing to passe. Even as, if a man seeke to a Phyfitian, to such a Phyfitian, that hee trusts to, into whose hands hee would put his life ; when this Phyfitian prescribes such a course, such a dyet, and such a thing to be taken at such a time, the more hee rests vpon the Phyfitian, the more carefull hee will be to obserue his prescription, and rules : And so, in this case, the more you rest on G o d , the more carefull you will be to vse such meanes as hee hath appointed , when hee hath said , these, and these meanes are to be vsed. In this case, I say, it is a signe your prayers are more

2. Reas.  
Else it is a signe  
we trust not  
God.

Simile.

to purpose, when you are diligent in the vse of them, when you dare not sleight nor neglect them.

3. *Reas.*

It is that wee  
pray for.

Againe, you must consider this, that when we pray, at any time, wee doe not pray to haue any thing done without meanes, but wee pray to haue a blessing vpon the meanes; and, if we pray for a blessing vpon the meanes, our minde is not that they should be omitted; for, you see, G o D doth all things by second causes, he saues vs not without our selues, that is, he vseth vs as instruments, he doth every thing by men, and by creatures, and by meanes, and the end of our prayers is, not to haue them done without meanes, but to haue a blessing vpon them. But that that is chiefly to be obserued to cleare this point to you is this; that prayer is not the onely meanes, it is but part of the meanes to bring any things to passe.

4. *Reas.*

Prayer not the  
only meanes.

There are two things to effect a businesse, that is, prayer and meanes both: we doe not say prayer is the onely meanes; indeede, then the other were excluded, but since it is but a part, and the other makes vp the totall meanes of bringing any thing to passe, it doth not exclude them, but they may be both joyned together, prayer, and the vse of the meanes. This is enough to shew that we may vse meanes, we may pray, and lay our hand on the plow, we may seek to G o D, and be diligent, and as diligent as any body else. But now these three Cautions are to be obserued.

Cautions a-  
bout the vse of  
the meanes,

The

The first is, that, if we doe vse meanes, we vse those that are right; for, if you trust God, and depend vpon him, you will not steppe out to any inordinate meanes, nor vse lawfull meanes in an inordinate manner: If you doe so, it is an argument that your prayers are of no value in your owne esteeme, you doe not rest on God; for, if you did, you would not vse other meanes, then hee hath appoyned.

Secondly, though you vse the meanes, and pray both, yet you must so vse the meanes, that your confidence be in your prayers: for it is one thing to vse the meanes, and it is another thing to haue confidence in them. And therefore wee say to you in this case, that you must doe as hee that vseth the light of the Sunne; he so vseth the light, that he hath an eye vpon the Sunne, from whom that light comes; for, he knowes, that if the Sunne were set, the light would be gone. Or as he that takes water in a Cesterne, or River, he so takes it, as that hee hath an eye to the fountaine, he knowes if the fountaine were stopped, the River would be quickly dried vp: So you should thinke with your selues, if I vse any meanes, any creature, any instrument to bring things to passe, mine eye must be vpon God: for all the helpe that we haue from the creature, it is but as a beame to the help that comes from God himselfe. And therefore you must doe in this case, as Phyſitians are wont to doe, they put many ingredients into a thing, but it is one principall

1. Caution.  
Wee must vſe  
right meanes,

2. Caution.  
Not trust the  
meanes,

Simile.

Simile.

Simile.

pall ingredient, amongst the rest, that he makes account will cure the disease: So doe, in this case, make vse, both of the prayer, and of the meanes, yet you must know, that prayer is the principall effecter of the thing, and the principall meanes, it is that, wherein your confidence is to be: for, indeede, it is G o d that doth bring every thing to passe: there is no good in the City, nor no evill, but he doth it; you know he takes all to himselfe. All the meanes, by which good, and ill is conveyed to you, they doe not doe the thing, they are but the *vehicula*, they are but the instruments, as the beere, and the wine, wherein the physicke is taken, but it is the physicke, the medicine that cures: So all the meanes cannot doe it, it is the helpe, and the power of G o d, the efficacie, that comes from him, that brings things to passe; therefore, that must be remembred, vse the meanes, that you vse, with dependance vpon G o d, with an eye vpon him, that your hearts rest not vpon them: for, if they doe, it is an inordinate vse of them.

*3. Caution.*  
Not to sticke  
to particular  
meanes.

Lastly, you must take heede of sticking in any particular meanes; for, if you doe, it is a signe that you trust not G o d as you ought to doe. It is a fault commonly, we pitch vpon such a particular way, and we thinke that must doe it, or nothing. Now if G o d be trusted to, he hath more wayes to the wood then one, he hath more means to bring a thing to passe then one: And therefore we must leauie it to him, who often doth it best by

by another meanes, then we dreamed of. As for example, *David* had a promise of the Kingdome; Now, when he had the Kingdome of *Iudah*, yet you know, the Kingdome of *Israel* stood out: for *Ishboseth* had the Kingdome, and *Abner* was his chiefe Captaine: besides, in his comming into his Kingdome of *Iudah*, we see how *God* wrought the busines, without his device, by a meanes, that he never thought of, in that battaile, when *Saul* was killed, and so many of his sonnes, there was so much way made for him, when himselfe vsed no meanes to bring it to passe. Afterward when the Kingdome of *Israel* was kept from him, and he had only *Iudah*, we see, *God* caused a division between *Ishboseth*, and *Abner* his chiefe Captain; vpon that comes *Abner*, and offers to *David* the whole Kingdome, but yet he was but a reconciled enemie; and what *Abner* might haue done, he knew not. Therefore, *God* by his providence, though *Ioab* sinned in it, caused *Abner* to be taken away by *Ioab*; when this was done, yet *Ishboseth* was aliue still; then were there two men set by the providence of *God*, though it were a great sinne in them to take away his head, and so the Kingdome came wholly to *David*: for there were but two sonnes, *Mephiboseth*, that was lame of his feet, and *Ishboseth*, that was lame in his minde, a weake man, vnable to manage so great, and weighty a busynesse to purpose: So *God* brought the busines to passe by a way, that *David* thought not of. Therefore, though wee may vsle meanes, yet, after the vsle of them, we

*Simile.*

Wee are more  
apt to trust  
men then God.

Why God  
workes not by  
our meanes.

*Cafe. 8.*  
About praying  
in faith, when  
a man wants a  
particular pro-  
mise, that the  
thing which he  
asketh shall be  
granted.

must depend vpon G o d , and leaue it to G o d to take one meanes, or other. We must doe in this case, as we doe when we goe to a man, that is ver- ry skilfull to doe a worke for vs : If we goe to a Carpenter, and tell him we haue such a thing to be done; or, if we goe to those that we call *Aqua- rioli*, that bring water from place to place, we tell him, this is our desire, but how he will worke, and which way he will bring it to passe, we know not, and yet we trust such a one : for, we say, he is an honest man of his word, and if hee haue vndertaken it, it is enough. Why will you not trust G o d , that goes so much beyond vs, that hath an infinite wisedome, and an infinite power? And therefore we should so vse the meanes, that withall we keepe our dependaunce vpon him, that we leaue it to him, to vse this, or that means, as it pleaseth him. For sometimes, it may be, he takes away that which we are about, sometimes he leaues vs partly destitute, and findes a way of his owne, that we might trust to him, and consider his power, and his wisedome, what he is able to doe. So much likewise shall serue for this Cafe.

Another Cafe is, what it is to pray in faith ? You know that is required. Now there is a com- mon error in this point : for a man may say, if I pray for the salvation of another, I haue no promise, how can I pray in faith ? when a man prayes to be guided in such a businesse, to haue such an enterprise to be brought to passe, to haue deliverance from such a trouble, such a sick- nesse,

nesse, from such a calamitie, that he lyes vnder, he findes no particular promise, and, for ought he knowes, it shall never be granted: How can hee be said to pray in faith ? for to pray in faith , is to beleue, that the thing shall bee done.

I answer, that to pray in faith, is to goe as farre as the promise goes. Now no particular man hath any particular promise, that hee shall haue such a deliverance, that he shall haue such a particular mercy granted him; and therefore it is not required to beleue that that particular thing should be done.

But you will say, what faith is it then that is required?

I say, it is enough to beleue that G o d is a father, that hee is ready to heare, and not onely that hee is ready to heare, but that hee is ready to doe that which is best for mee, in such a particular: for both are required, that you beleue him to bee well affected towards you, as a father, as one that tenders your good , and not onely so, but that hee will doe that, in that particular, that shall be most for his owne glory, and for your good : and, if you doe so, you pray in faith ; though, for the particular, you know not, whether it shall be granted, or no. Indeed, if we had a particular promise, as Elias had that it should not raine, &c. in that case, we were bound to beleue in particular, but not having that , wee are not tyed vnto it : for the promise is the object of faith , and the habit is

*Answ.*

:

*Obiect.*

What faith is required in prayer.

*Answ.*

Wee are not bound to beleue, that the particular thing shall be granted which wee pray for.

not to worke beyond the object; for the object is the rule, and the limit of the habit; therefore you may pray in faith, when yet you hane no ground to belieue, and to thinke, that that particular thing should be granted. For example, if a father pray, that his sonne may haue grace wrought in his heatt, that his soule may be saved, it may be the L o R D will never doe it; or, if one friend pray for another to the same purpose, though the thing be not done, yet the prayer returnes tnto his bosome, hee is no looser by it, there is a reward belongs to him, for seeking to G o D in sincerity, it is his duty, that he should doe so. The like I may say for every particular case. And this incouragement you may haue, that there is never any particular prayer put vp, wherein you seeke things, that are not granted, but you mistake in it: for, if you belieue thus farre, as I said to you, be fure, that your prayers are accepted, G o D will doe that, which is best for you, and your prayers shall not be lost. So much also for that.

If our prayers  
be not granted  
we mistake in  
them.

*Cafe. 9.*

About a mans  
knowledge  
that his prayer  
is heard.

*Answe.*

The last case is, how shall a man know whether his prayer be heard, or not?

For answere to this we will giue you this one rule, (and that is as farre as wee can goe) that those prayers that are made by the assistance of G o D s holy spirit, it is certaine, they are alwaies heard. If you finde that at any time, you neede make no question, but that G o D heares it, and will doe the thing, observing the Cautions, that we haue given you heretofore, that is, for the meanes,

meanes, the manner, the time, and the measure: for it cannot be, but that when the heart is inlarged by G o d s owne spirit , that the prayer is an expression of holy desires, the L o R D alwayes heares: that place is cleere for it, Rom. 8.27. that *he knowes the meaning of the spirit*, that is, hee so knowes it, that hee hearkeneth to it, that he alwayes accepts of it; and therefore, when you come in such a case, at any time, that your hearts are inlarged in a speciall manner: Marke, I say, when your hearts are inlarged in a speciall manner, and that, with holy desires, certainly, then God means to grant our requests: he would not send his spirit to be an intercessour in your hearts, if he did not meane to doe it: for, in that case, hee withholdes his spirit , hee giues vs not that inlargement of heart: onely this distinction must be carefully remembred; you may be sometimes very earnest, (the Parent may be very earnest for his childe, as David was for his; And Moses, for ought we see, was earnest to haue gone into the land of Canaan, they were things that they desired) and yet that may be an expression of naturall desires.

In that case, a man may be very earnest, and yet he cannot build vpon it, to say, my heart is much inlarged in prayer, and therefore I shall be heard; but take in this, when the heart is inlarged with holy desires, and that in a speciaall manner, somewhat more then ordinary , as that, you see, it is the worke of the spirit of God, quickning your heart, opening it wide, strengthening, and

H 3                  inlargeing

Rom. 8.27.

When God  
will grant our  
prayers, and  
when not.

Note.

What kinde of  
inlargement of  
heart argues  
that our pray-  
ers are heard.

inlargeing it, and sharpening grace, and holiness in you, in those requests you put vp to G o d, in this case, build vpon it, your prayers are heard from that ground wee haue given you, he knowes the meaning of the Spirit. So much shall ferue for thosse Cates of Conscience in this spirituall duty of calling vpon G o d.

Qualifications  
or conditions  
required in that  
prayer that shal  
be accepted.

*I Condition*  
That the per-  
son be right.

*James 5. 16.*

*I*  
Because a man  
must haue  
Christ, before  
he haue any  
thing else.

*2*  
The generall  
Covenant is  
before the par-  
ticular.

Now the last thing wee propounded was this: What the qualification is that is required in our prayers: for now we haue said so much of prayer, it is a necessary thing, that wee know what conditions are required, that it may be acceptable.

And the first (we will commend to you, that which is the ground and first in order before all the rest) is, that the person be right. *The prayer of the righteous prevaleth much, James. 5. 16.*

The ground of it is this; a man must first haue Christ, before he can haue any thing else, he hath given vs all things else with Christ; if we haue all things else, if we haue not him, it is nothing: All the promises, you know, are Yea, and Amen, but it is in him; so that we must first haue him. And besides, the generall Covenant must goe before the particular: for the ground of all prayer is this or that particular promise, but you must first be within the Covenant, you must first haue the generall Covenant belonging to you, before you can haue the particular branches of it; & therfore a man must be within the Covenant, his person must be first righteous, and be accepted; & therefore let none deceive themselves in this case, to thinke

thinke thus with himselfe, he hopes his heart is sincere, and his prayer is right, and his ends are good: for though all this were true, yet if his person be not right, God regards it not. You know the blood of a sheep, & the blood of a swine, they are both alike; it may be, the blood of the swine is better then the other; yet the blood of the swine was not to be offered, because it was the blood of a swine. So in this case, the prayer of an vnregenerate man may be as well framed, for the petitions, for every thing that is required immediately to a prayer; but the heart, from whence it comes, the person, from whence it procedes, that is it that makes the difference, and therefore that must be observed: see the person be right. And therefore you shall finde Psal. 4.3. David makes that the ground, why his praiers should be heard; saith hee, *beye sure that God hath chosen for himselfe the godly man: And when I call upon him, I shall be heard:* for that is the ground that hee takes to himselfe, that hee shall be heard, that God hath chosen to himselfe the godly man. As if he should say, I am of the number; and therefore you that are my enemies, and thinke to preuaile against me, I feare you not; for I pray to a God that will defend mee, I am a godly man, and vpon that ground I beleive that my prayer is heard: Beloved, otherwise, though we pray, and pray hard, yet our sinnes cry lowder then our prayers, they cry downe our prayers, they make a greater noise then they, that the noise that our sinnes make is like the noise of a Thunder,

*Simile.*

An vnregenerate man may frame a prayer aswell as a godly man.

Psal. 4. 3.

Our sinnes outcry our prayers till our perious beright

*Simile.*

2  
Remove parti-  
cular sinnes.

Why the Saints  
begin their  
prayers with  
humiliation.

1 Tim. 1.8.

when the noise of our prayers is but like the crackling of thornes, that it cannot be heard for the noyse that sinne makes in the eares of the L O R D . Thus it is, in this case, when wee come before G o d in our sinnes, when a man comes into his presence in his vngeneracie.

But this is not all, but likewise, a man that is within the Covenant, may haue a particular sin, (as you heard heretofore) that may intercept his prayers, and that may hinder the blessing : so that, that sinne must be removed, before his prayers can be heard. It is true, *the sonne abides in the house for ever*, but yet the sonne may commit such an offence, that his father may vle him as a servant, hee may deny his requests, and refuse them, when hee comes to seek any thing at his hands. And therefore, there must be a particular reconciliation, a particular repentance, that sinne must be removed, and done away, that stands in the way. And therefore, this method the Saints haue kept in calling vpon G o d : See in *Daniel*, and *Ezra*, all of them, for the most part, when they make any compleat prayer, we see, still they begin with humiliauion, and confession of sinnes. And the reason of it is, that their persons might be cleare, and innocent, that those sinnes might be removed, which would stand in their way; and likewise, that is a ground of that in the 1 Tim. 1.8. faith the Apostle there, *I will, that Prayers be made in all places, that you lift up pure hands without wrath and doubting :* The meaning is this, not onely, that a man be within the Covenant, but that

that he be cleansed from all particular sinnes, that might cleue to him, and hang vpon him. As, for example, when thou wouldest be accepted of God, if there be any particular sin hang on thee; that must be removed by renewing thy repentaunce; and besides that, see what the Scripture takes notice of, when a man comes to pray, his heart must be cleansed from pride, (for God refiseth the proud) his heart must be brought to an humble disposition; likewise it must be cleansed from wrath, hee must lift vp pure hands without wrath; this is oft required: *Matth. 5. Leave thine offering, and goe and make peace with thy brother.* So likewise from vnthankfulness; our prayers are not accepted, except we be thankfull for mercies received. The like wee may say of every particular case: we must be carefull to cleanele our selues from all sinfull lusts, and corrupt affections, that they haue not dominion in our hearts; but that we lift vp pure hearts, and innocent hands; and that is the first thing that is required, that the person be right; that is, not onely that he be within the Covenant, but likewise that those particular sinnes be removed, that may be an impediment to his prayers.

The second thing required is faith; *Lift vp pure hands without wrath and doubting.* You know that in *James;* *Let him aske of God, let him aske in faith, and waver not.* So that, though prayer be the key to open Gods treasures, yet faith is the hand that turnes the key, without which it will doe no good.

When we pray  
we must cleansse  
our hearts.

1  
From pride.

2  
From wrath.  
*Mat 5.23,24.*

3  
From vnthank-  
fulness.

2. Requisite or  
condition is  
faith.  
*James 1.5,6.*

Simile.

Now

Why the Lord  
requirereth faith  
in prayer.

I

Now the L o r d requires faith; partly, for his owne sake, he should not otherwise be acknowledg'd, if you did not trust him, when you come to seeke him, if you did not rest vpon him. Besides, he should loose his glory ; for in this wee glorifie him, when we trust him, and we dishonour him, when we distrust him; when we come, and seeke to him, and doe not rest vpon him, we dishonour him.

2

James.1.6.

Besides, in regard of vs he requires faith, and will not heare vs without it ; because, as it is James.1.6.in the same place, where faith is required, there is good reason why it is required ; for, saith the Apostle there, *he that beleeves not, or he that wavers, bee is like a wave of the Sea:* that is, sometimes in his prayer he is very earnest, as a wave that swells high ; sometimes againe he will be nothing at all;yea,saith the Apostle, he is not onely vneven in the businesse of prayer, sometimes earnest and forward, and sometimes giving over againe, off and on, but such a man is vnstable in all his wayes; for he that trusts in G o d, will be carefull, not onely in prayer, but to keepe all his wayes right, but hee that trusts him not, wavers in every thing : he is(it may be) diligent in prayer, he will looke to his wayes for a time, but he rests not vpon G o d, he rests vpon other things, *He is like a wave,* he is not constant : and therefore faith is required. Now, when I say faith is required,know this,that there is a double faith required in *the providence of G o d, praise*

A two fold faith  
required in our  
prayers.

The one is a faith in the providence of G o d,  
the other is a faith in his promise. First,

First, I say, faith in the providence, which is a thing of much moment, and we are apt to forget it. We see it cleerely, *Psal. 146.* *Blessed is he that trusts in the God of Jacob, &c. who made heaven, and earth, and the Sea, who keeps Covenant, and mercy for ever,* you see faith there required in the providence, *he made heaven and earth, the sea; he is such a Good,* who is able to bring great things to passe; for he made heaven and earth: and is he not able to doe any thing besides?

I  
Faith in Gods promises.

*Psal. 146. 5,6.*

Secondly; there must be a faith in the promises, as is expressed in the other words, *he keepeth Covenant for ever.* So likewise, to expresse the defect of it: You see when *Martha and Mary* came to *Christ* to raise *Lazarus*, they beleaved he was ready enough to doe it, (there was faith in his willingnesse) but they wanted faith in his providence; for *Martha* comes to him, and tells him, *Lord,* saith she, *he hath beeene in the grane four dayes;* as if she had said, surely now it cannot be done, if thou hadst come sooner, it might haue beeene brought to passe: so she beleaved him to be willing, but there wanted faith in the providence.

2  
Faith in the promises.

Againe, as here faith in the providence was wanting, so we see, in the Leper, there was faith in the providence, (it may be, the other was wanting, but that is not expresseſ, it is more probable he had both) *Lord, if thou wilt, thou canſt make me whole.* Here was an evidence of faith in the providence, he acknowledgeth his power, *if thou wilt, thou canſt make me whole;* but because *Christ* did anſwere him, it is likely he had faith

Mat.7.7.

We doubt of  
Gods willing-  
nes more then  
of his power to  
grant our re-  
quests.

How faith may  
be strengthened  
in prayer.  
From Gods At-  
tributes.  
Which are of  
two sorts,  
1. Absolute.

faith in the promise too; so, I say, there must be a faith, first, in the providence; secondly, there must be a faith also in the promise of God: you haue ground enough for that, you haue his sure word for it; he hath said, *ask and yee shall haue, seek and yee shall finde, knocke and it shall be opened to you; and what soever you aske, if it be according to his will, it shall be done to you.* So that is the thing we are chiefly to looke vnto, to consider this faith in Gods promise; for men are ready to say, I doubt not but God is able, but all the question is, whether he be willing or no. And therefore, if wee will haue our prayers strong, and prevalent, we must be carefull to strengthen our faith in his promise: for, as that is strong, so our prayers doe more prevale with God. It is a matter of much moment, and therefore we will shew briefly how your faith may be strengthened, and likewise how you may know it.

First, you shall strengthen your faith, if you consider the nature of God. Beloved, this is a great cause why wee beleeve not the promise of God, and his readinesse to helpe vs in difficult cases, because wee are ignorant of the nature of God, of the Attributes of God, or at least, we doe not consider them. For example, (that I may open it to you a little, and shew you the way of making vse of the Attributes of God, in calling vpon him, & strengthening our faith from them) consider, first, the Justice of God, (I will give you examples, how the Saints haue still strengthened their faith from Gods Attributes) David vseth this Argument

Argument, *Lord, thou art just, I am innocent;* when he telleth God of his Justice, and withall expref-  
feth his owne innocencie, it is a strong Argu-  
ment. *David,* you see, vseth it oft, (I neede not to  
name particulars) *Lord reward me according to mine  
Innocency, &c. thou knowest I am righteous,* and  
mine enemies haue done me thus, and thus much  
wrong, and thou art just: God cannot deny this;  
for it is a strong Argument, that is taken from  
such an attribute.

1. Justice.

So againe, the goodness of God; *Lord thou art  
full of mercie;* on the other side, *I am full of mis-  
erie:* and when these are put together, it is a  
great meanes to strengthen our faith. And there-  
fore, we see, *David* often expresseth his owne ca-  
lamitie, his disease, how he was oppressed by e-  
nemies, and slandered, &c. and God's mercy,  
that is the ground of it, *God is full of compassion;*  
as if he shoulde say, thou art full of goodness, and  
I am in calamitie, and miserie, at this time: and  
that was an Argument whereby hee strengthened  
his faith.

2. Mercy.

So againe, another Attribute of God is, his  
glory; when we make an Argument thus, *Lord,  
thou hast an eye to thy glorie,* and I aime at thy  
glory: In such a request, it is a strong prevailing  
Argument with him. You know, *Moses* prevai-  
led with him, when he sought the saving of the  
whole people of *Israel*, *Lord,* saith he, *thy name  
will be polluted; what will the Heathen say?* and since  
I aime at thy glory in it, deny me not. And like-  
wise *Ezekias*, and *David*, they vse the same Ar-  
gument

3. Glory.

gument to God, shall the dust praise thee? shall any glory be given to thee in the graue? shall we be able to doe any thing for thy honour, when we are dead? So that the Arguments that are taken from Gods glory, and our aime at his glory, is another meanes to strengthen our faith.

## 4. Power.

2 Chron. 14. 11

2 Chron. 10. 12

5. Vnchangeableness.

Moreover, the *power* of God, that is another Attribute, whereby we may conceiuie the same Argument, as before, when we goe to God, and expresse our weaknesse, and his power; *Lord*, we are weake, we are able to doe nothing; *Lord*, thou art almighty, thou madest heaven aad earth, it is a strong Argument to preuale with him. So, we see, *Asa* prevailed with God, 2 Chron. 14. Oh *Lord*, saith he, *it is all one with thee to helpe with many or few*, and we rest vpon thee: as if he shculd say, we are exceeding few, we are exceeding weake, we are able to doe nothing, but thou art able to doe it, with a few, as well as with a great multitude, there he puts them together. And the like we haue of *Iehosaphat*, *Lord, wee haue no strength to stand before our enemies, but our eyes are to thee*. As if he shculd say, thou hast strength and power enoughe, thou art able to doe it, though we are vnable. This is another Argument taken from the power of God.

Againe, the *vnchangeableness* of God. When one comes to the *Lord*, and shall say to him, *Lord*, thou hast done thus and thus in former times for thy servants; *Lord*, thou hast done thus and thus for me, in another case; and thou art *vnable*, thou art the same *God*: this is a great meaneſs

meanes to strengthen our faith: as you know, it is in your Law-suits, when you haue a president, it addes strength to the cause, and when we haue presidents for this, it will adde strength to vs, and that strength is taken from God, vnchangeablenesse: if we put them together, *Lord*, thou art vnchangeable, *Lord*, thou hast done it to other men, in the like case, thou hast done it to me also in the like case; it is a strong Argument, and an Argument that *David* vseth: You see how he is stayed by it, *Psal. 22.4.* *Lord, our fathers trusted in thee, and were delivered, they trusted in thee, and were not confounded.* As if he should say, *Lord*, thou art vnchangeable, thou hearest them in the same case, when they trusted in thee; now, it is my case, and therefore I beseech thee to helpe me in my distresse.

*Simile.**Psal. 22.4.*

Againe the *faithfulness* of *God*, the fidelity of *God*, that is another of his Attributes: and when we make our Argument thus, *Lord*, thou art faithfull, and I trust in thee, it is a strong Argument, you know, it is an Argument that prevales much with men. A man is ready to say, he trusts mee, I must not deceiue him: Now the *Lord* keepes Covenant, and mercie for ever. When wee come, and vse this to him, *Lord*, thou art faithfull, thou hast said, thou wilt keepe Covenant, and mercy for ever, thou canst not doe otherwise, it is thy nature, thou canst not deny thy selfe, and I rest on thee, I depend on thee, in such a case, it cannot be, that the *Lord* should faile vs; If a man will not faile one that trusts in him, certainly

*6. Faithfulness*

certainly the L O R D will not, and that is an Argument that is vsed oft, thou never failest them that trust thee.

I. Relatiue.

Then, besides the absolute attributes of G o d, consider his relatiue attributes; he is a *Father*, and a ~~Master~~<sup>M a i s t r</sup>. It is a strong argument, that is taken from these. If we goe to the L O R D, and say, L O R D, thou art a Father, thou art a Master, thou art a Husband; whither should the children goe, but to their father? whither should the wife goe, but to her husband? whither should the servant goe, but to their Master, to their Lord? L O R D, thou hast commanded vs to provide for our owne, and he is worse then an Infidel that provides not for his owne. L O R D, we belong to thee, we are thine. We see, David vseth this Argument, that G o d hath made him. You haue it oft in the Psalms, that G o d hath made him, not onely his Creature, but had made him againe, hee was his Servant, *I am thy Servant*, he oft vseth this Relatiue, that G o d was his G o d, and that hee was G o d s servant, one that did belong to him, and that did depend vpon him. And surely (my Beloved) dependance, and seeking to *God*, is a great meanes to winne him to vs. When wee see an other depend vpon vs, one that is ours, that is an effectuall motiue with men: the same is as prevalent with *God*; and therefore may strengthen our faith. Now, when I say these Arguments prevaile with *God*, the meaning is indeed, that they prevaile with vs, they strengthen our faith, they enable vs to beleue, that *God* is ready to helpe

helpe vs, and when we beleeve it, and trust vp-on him, then indeede G o d is readie to second it; because then we are prepared, we can then put vp our desires in the prayer of faith: other-wise they are put vp with doubting, and that makes them vnaeceptable to G o d, and vneffe-ctuall. And now, as I have shewed you the way, so likewise in a word, we will shew you when we doe pray in faith, (for that is a thing that is very vsefull) you shall know it by this: (for I adde that, because I see the Scripture requires it, as such a maine condition, without which a man cannot be accepted, *be it done to thee according to thy faith,* it is every where inculcated) you shall know it by the quietnesse of your minde, and your secu-  
rity. When a man calls vpon G o d, and his minde is quiet in it, it is a signe that he beleeveth, and trusts in him, it is a prayer of faith. *Hannah* you know, in that case, shee looked no more sad, be-cause shee trusted in G o d, shee beleeveth the thing should be done: and therefore, if you finde sol citude and perplexity in your mindes, it is a signe that your prayers want so much faith; for if you did rest vpon Go d, you would be quiet, and secure in him.

Secondly, if you doe beleeve, you will conti-nue in prayer. You know, it was an argument of the faith of the woman of Canaan, that shee conti-nued that shee would take no deniall; though the L o r d denied her, and put her off, yet shee held out: and what was the reason of it? because shee beleeveth that he was the sonne of *David*, that he

How wee may  
know that vve  
pray in faith.

I  
By the quiet-  
nesse of the  
minde after.

2  
By continu-  
ance in prayer.

I was

*Simile.*

was mercifull, and that he would heare in the end. So that continuance in prayer, it is an argument we doe beleieve the L o r d . As a man that beleeves, that such a man is within the house whom he desires to speake with, he is content to wait long. Or one, that hath a suit, and he knowes that he shall haue an end of it, at this time, hee will never giue over : So it is in this case, if we beleieve, we will be content to waite, *he that believeth will not make haste*, because hee trusts in G o d , and depends vpon him.

<sup>3</sup>  
Diligence in  
the use of the  
meanes,

Likewise, an argument of faith is a diligent vse of those meanes that G o d hath prescribed, and no other. And so we haue shewed you two things that are required in prayer: That the person must be righteous, and within the Covenant: Secondly, faith is required, and likewise how this faith is wrought, both in his providence, and in his promises, and likewise how we shall know, whether our prayers be the pray-  
ers of faith, or no.

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**F I N I S.**

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**THE**

THE  
FIFTH  
SERMON.

I THESS. 5. 17.

*Pray continually.*

**B**He next condition required in prayer is *fervencie*; you know the place, *the prayer of the righteous prevalest much, if it be fervent*. The L O R D requires this qualification in paryer, because it puts the heart into a holy, and spirituall disposition: for it is not simply the making of the request, that G o d lookes for at our hands, but such a working vpon our hearts by prayer, such a bringing of them to a good frame of grace, by that duty, that thereby we are more fitted to receive the mercy,

I 2

that

3. Condition  
required in  
prayer is fer-  
vency.  
James 5. 16.

What God re-  
quires in praier

Why God re-  
quires fervency

*Simile.*

that before we were not. When a man is fervent in prayer, it sets all the wheeles of the soule the right way, it puts the heart into a holy, and spirituall disposition and temper; so that the L o r d sees it now fit to bestow mercy vpon such a man, that before was vnfit, by reason of his vntowardnesse, and stubbornesse of heart, by reason of that vncleane and vnholy disposition, that he saw in him. And therefore hee will have prayer fervent; not so much because the very fervency of prayer it selfe is respected, but because by vertue of that fervencie the heart is made better: when a man comes to G o d with a request, like the request of the patient to the phisitian, it may be the phisitian denies long, when the patient askes things that are pleasant, and agreeable to him; not because he is vnwilling to giue them, but because his body must be brought into another temper, he must take a vomit, or a purge, that perhaps is grievous to him, but this must be done before he be fit to receiue such cordialls: so the L o r d doth with his servants, though he be willing to bestow such mercies on them, yet, because they are not fitted, he requires continuance in prayer, and fervencie in it. Therefore, we say, in prayer all the graces of G o d s spirit are set on worke, and the more fervent the prayer is, the more they are intended, the more they are acted, the more they are increased; and therefore the L o r d is moved by this fervency, to bestow a mercie on vs, that otherwise he would not doe.

But

But now all the question is what this fervencie is?

You shall find it vsually expressed in the Scriptures by such metaphors as these, *crying to the Lord, wrestling with the Lord, striving with him, and giving him no rest*, wherein these two things are to be marked.

First, a man is said then to be fervent, when he puts all his strength to prayer, when hee is very earnest, and importunate with the Lord, when hee striues, and contends with him, though he finde many difficulties, and impediments, yet he breakes through all, this is to be fervent in prayer, to be importunate with the Lord. For example, when a man comes to pray, and findes many discouragements, and findes himselfe guilty of many sinnes, and findes little holinesse, he hath but feble faith to his owne sense, he findes much deadnesse of spirit, yet he continues instant notwithstanding; and when likewise hee doth not onely finde these impediments in himselfe, but he finds the Lord exceeding backward to the thing, either giving no answere, turning the deaf eare to him, or it may be, giving a contrary answer, as to the woman of Canaan.

As for example, when a man comes to pray for health, it may be his sicknes increaseth vpon him more, when he prayes to overcome such a lust or temptation, it may be, it is doubled vpon him; when hee prayes for such a deliverance, it may be, the oppression growes more and more, as it was with the Israelites, when they sought for de-

Quest.

*Ansiv.*  
When a man  
is said to be  
fervent.

I  
When wee put  
to all our  
strength not-  
withstanding  
difficulties.

Mat. 15.

liverance, the oppression grew greater: now to holde out, notwithstanding this, and to continue in prayer, and to outrastle God in it, though he seeme backward to the request; this is to be fervent in prayer.

<sup>2</sup>  
When we are  
constant,

Secondly, fervency is not onely loud praying, but continuall knocking, when a man is not onley importunate with the Lord, but he continues long, he will not giue over, till he haue got the blessing. You know, Jacobs fervencie was feene in that, that he continued all night, *hee wrestled with the Lord*. What was the reason that he wrestled? he would not let him goe, till he had got the blessing, till he had obtained the thing he sought for. So I say, this earnestnesse, and continuance in prayer, the breaking through all difficulties, this is to wrastle with the Lord: for, all wrastling, and striving, you know, supposest some opposition on the other part. Indeed, if there were no opposition, it were a small thing; but I say, when the Lord is most backward, when the thing is most improbable, when there is much difficultie, that you know not how it should be brought to passe, yet you continue striving, and giue the Lord no rest, you will not giue over, this is fervency in prayer, and this is a condition that the Lord requires. Onely these two Cautions must be remembred, that we mistake not this fervency.

Cautions a-  
bout fervency.

I  
That it be a  
fruit of faith.

Simile.

First, remember, fervencie, if it be right, it must be a fruit of faith: for there is a fervencie that comes not from faith, but from a naturall sence of want, when a man is indeede as a swine that

that is pinched, which, you know: will cry exceeding loud, not because it lookes for helpe, but because it is pinched: so any creature, or man naturally will vse importunity, when he wants any thing, he will be earnest in his requests; such fervency the Lor d regards not, because there is no more but a mere exp[ression] of naturall desires, there is no holinesse in it, there is no fire of the spirit, but when this is added to it, that there is not onely a sence of the thing we want, but also a hope of mercie, a ground to beleue that I shall have the thing granted, and out of this ground I am earnest and importunate; now earnestnesse is a fruit of faith. When I svs C H R I S t lived vpon earth, when men came and cryed earnestly vnto him, and were exceeding importunate, some to be healed of their diseases, some to haue devills cast out, &c. we see his answere was still to them, be it to thee, (howe) not according to their importunity, and fervency, but according to their faith: as if he should say, I heede not, I regard not all this clamour and earnestnesse, if they be onely exp[ressions] of such wants, if they be onely in the sence of such neede, and no more; but if they proceed from faith, and that faith let you a worke to call vpon me, *be it vnto thee according to that.* For indeede, these two things make vp fervencie in prayer, sence of neede, and hope of mercie, when a man hath faith and hope to increase his fervencie; and it ariseth from that ground, as well as out of the other, (not that I exclude the other, for it is a very great helpe, and

When fervency  
is a fruit of  
faith.

Whence fer-  
vency springs.

*S.m.le.*

that which puts sticks on the fire, as it were, to make our fervency the more) I say from sense of our need, when we consider seriously what want we haue, and then adde this hope, and faith; when these two shall set you on worke, this fervency is a fruit of faith. This is one caution that must be remembred.

*2. Cast on.  
That it bee  
mingled with  
sincerity.*

Another caution is this, that your fervencie be joyned with sincerity; for a man may be fervent to obtaine such and such blessings, as he may begge at G o d s hand, very earnestly, he may aske credit, he may aske to haue guidance in such a businesse, he may aske wisdome to bring such an enterprise to passe, hee may aske health, and continuance of life, but to what end? if it be that he may bestow it vpon his lusts, if it be that he may liue more deliciously, theret he may be some body more in the world, that he may haue outward conveniences, such as his flesh desires, if this be all, here this fervency is not regarded; not that these things are excluded, for the L O R D giues vs leauue to seeke our owne comforts, and you may be earnest, and importunate, even for the comfort it selfe, but yet all these, if they be not capable of a further vse, if that be not intended, but the abuse of them, and an intent to vse them another way, the L O R D heedes it not, it is no true fervencie: and therefore in Rom. 12.11. it is the exhortation of the Apostle; *be fervent in spirit serving the Lord;* when wee many times it may be, are feruent in spirit seruing our selues, we are fervent to aske such and such requests, our

*Note.**Rom.12.11.*

of ends of our owne, as when a man desires able gifts, high gifts, to get glory, and to get wealth to himselfe, and not to serue his master, this is to aske the talent, not for his masters vse, but for his owne vse; doe you thinke the *Lord* will heare such prayers? can you expect it at his hands? You shall see the contrary disposition in the Saints; when they were earnest with the *Lord* for any thing, still they expresse that to him, and say, *Lord*, wee desire not this for our selues, but for thy glorie, that wee may vse it for some good purpose, &c. *David*, when he was earnest for life, when he was in sicknesse, and doubted of his recovery, what argument doth he vse? *Lord*, saith he *shalt thou haue glory from the graue?* As if hee should say, if thou give me life, I will giue it thee againe, I will improue it, and husband it to thy advantage, and not to my owne. And so *Hannah*, when she was earnest for a sonne, she makes this promise to the *Lord*, that he shall be for him, and his advantage; she would dedicate him to his vse, and consecrate him to his service. So *Jacob*, when he was earnest with the *Lord* to giue him meate, drinke, and cloathes, &c. *Lord*, saith hee, *if thou doe, I will giue the tenth part to thee againe.* I say, when the heart is thus disposed in our fervencie, in our importunity, when we aske any thing at the *Lords* hands, that our conscience tells vs within, that if wee had it, wee would bestow it vpon the *Lord*, wee would not abuse it, wee would not spend it on our lusts, it should not be to serue our selues, but to serue the *Lord* with all,

What arguments the  
Saints haue  
vised in their  
prayers.

3. Condition  
required in  
prayer is hu-  
mility.  
Iam 4.  
2Chron.7.14.

Isay. 66.2.

Reasons why  
humility is re-  
quired in pra-  
yer.

I  
God exalts such

Gen. 33.

all , then our fervencie is rightly ordered.

The next condition required, is *humility*, as *James 4. The Lord giues grace to the humble: and 2 Chron.7.14. If my people humble themselves, and call upon my name, then w:ll I heare in heaven, and grant their requests.* And throughout the Scriptures,you see,that this is a condition that the *Lord* puts in every where; *hee hath respect to the low e- state, Isay.66.2. saith the Lord, all these things haue my hands made,* looking vpon all the creatures, the whole frame of them, they are all good, and I haue respect vnto them, but, saith he, I regard not all these in comparison of an humble heart, *to him will I looke that is of an humble, and contrite spirit;* when the *Lord* lookes vpon our prayers, if they come not from a broken heart, they want that condition that he lookes for: for *hee giues grace to the humble;* because such a man is little in his owne eyes, and fit to be exalted, fit to receiue a mercy at *G o d s* hands.

You know, it is a rule that the *Lord* keepes for such as are humble and low, such he exalts; those that exalt themselves he puts downe. Now when a man is little in his owne eyes, that parity, that sense of his owne vnworthinesse is a prevailing argument with him ; and therefore *Gen. 32. Jacob* vseth that Argument, when hec comes to put vp th:t petition, to be delivered from *Esaue: Lord, I am lessē then all thy mercies:* that is, take any of thy mercies, and put them in one end of the ballance, and put me in the other, and I am lessē then it, and lighter then it,take all the

the worth that is in me, it is not heavie enough for the least mercie. Now, when hee was thus humbled, and little, and vile in his ewne eyes, the *Lord* bestowed that mercie on him, hee was now fit to receiue it. So *David*, when the *Lord* sends him word by *Nathan*, that he would *build him a house for ever*, (you see how hee expressed himselfe) *hee went into the house of the Lord, and sate before him, and said, Lord, what am I, and what is my fathers house?* As if he should say, I was taken out of the dust, I was one of the meanest men of *Israel*, and a man of no account, of no worth, and yet thou hast had respect vnto me thus farre, not onely to make me King over thy people, but to build my Kingdonie, and my houfe, to make me a constant house for ever. I say, this sente of our owne vnworthiness, it makes vs more fit to receiue the mercie, to be exalted by receiving such a request, as we put vp to the *Lord*, and therefore hee regards the prayer of the humble.

Moreover, *God gives grace to the humble*, that is, he shewes favour to them, when they come and aske any thing at his hands, because an humble man will be ready to doe whatsoever he will: it is an expression of *David*, in *Acts. 2. 22. he will doe whatsoever I will*: that may be said of euery humble man, he is exceeding pliable to the *Lords will*, hee is ready to doe whatsoever hee knowes to be his pleasure, hee resists him in nothing. Now, when a man will doe whatsoever *God will*, the *Lord* will be ready to doe whatsoever

<sup>1</sup> Sam. 7.

<sup>2</sup>  
God gives  
grace to such,

*Acts 2.22.*

uer

Mat. 22.

ver he will, he will be ready to say to him, as he did to the Canaanite, *Oh woman, be it to thee as thou wilst.* When a man, on the other side, resists the Lord, (as every proud man doth, saith the text) the *Lord resisteth him, the Lord resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.* A resisting spirit causeth the *Lord* to resist our prayers; and therefore it is, that the *Lord* is ready to the humble man, becauie hee yeelds to the *Lord* in all things, and when a man yeelds to the *Lord*, (take that for a rule) in obeying Gods commandements, God will yeeld to vs in granting our petitions.

Note.

<sup>3</sup>  
It is an acceptable sacrifice

Psal. 51.

Besides, when the heart is humbled, and broken, and contrite, it is an acceptable sacrifice to the *Lord*, which winnes it at his hands: he smells a sweete savour from such a sacrifice aboue all other; yea it is that which sets a high price vpon every sacrifice that we offer; the best prayers, the best workes, that proceede not from an humble heart, he regards them not: as *Psal. 51. Lord,* saith he, *if I offer sacrifice, thou wilt not regard it, but the sacrifices of a contrite, and humble spirit,* those thou regardest, and those sacrifices that proceede from it; when we come to make a petition to the *Lord* (it was the manner in the old law not to come empty-handed) a p'oud person comes empty-handed, but an humble person comes with a sacrifice, and the best sacrifice; because he sacrificeth himselfe, and his owne will, that is, he empties himselfe of himselfe, he opens a doore to the *Lord* to come, and dwell in him, when a proud man barres him out; such a sacrifice

fice the L o r d is well pleased with, and such a sacrifice speakes for one, it makes way for his requests, and therefore the L o r d hearkens to it.

Lastly, the L o r d is ready to heare those that are humble, because whatsoever they receiue, they take it as of grace, and not as debt: whereas a proud man, a man that hath a good conceit of himselfe, a man that is lift vp in his owne opinion, thinkes it to be due, he thinkes there is some correspondence betweene his works, and the wages. You know what is said of the *Pharise*, that *the Publican went away iustified rather then he*. Why so? Because the *Publican* thought himselfe worthy of nothing. And therefore *Ezek. 36. 31.* when the L o r d promiseth those great mercies to his people, he requires this condition of them, that they should *acknowledge themselves worthy to be destroyed*. When a man hath a senfe of his owne vnworthinesse, and so comes to the L o r d, and askes it as of meere grace and mercy, that is a great motiue to prevale with him: for he is very carefull of that: you know in *Deut. 8. 11.* how wary the L o r d was in giving this rule to them; *take heede when thou commest into that good land, thinke not to say with thy selfe, the Lord hath done this for my owne righteousness: no, saith he, I haue not done it for that, but for my Covenant which I made with Abraham, Isaac, & Jacob, that is, for my owne names sake, for my mercies sake, for the covenant that I confirmed with them, that is the covenant in Iesus Christ; therefore I haue done it, and not for your owne righteousness. So you see, that this*

4  
They receive  
all as of free  
grace.

Luke 18.

Ezek. 36. 31.

Deut. 8. 11.

5. Condition required in prayer is, to sanctifie the Lord in our hearts.

this is a condition the L O R D will haue observed in our calling vpon him, that our hearts be humbled, that a man be little, and vile in his owne eyes, that he come with a broken, and contrite heart, pliable to him in all things, ready to obey him; when the heart is so disposed, hee giues grace, that is, he shewes favour, hee is ready to grant our requests.

The next condition required in prayer, is, that wee *sanctifie the Lord in our hearts*. You know, when *Nadab* and *Abihu* drew neere vnto him with a common fire, (when they should have brought such fire as came from heaven, holy fire) the L O R D destroyed them, and he giues this reason; *for I will be sanctified in those that draw neare to me*. When we come to call vpon the L O R D, we know, then we come neare to him, and in such drawing neare, wee must sanctifie him in our hearts, that is, we must conceive him to be, as he is, most holy: now if the L O R D be most holy, if he that is vncleane and impure, and vnholy, shall come neare him, hee sanctifies not the L O R D G o d, (that is) he comes not to him as to a most holy G o d, but he lookest vpon him, as if he were a common person; and therefore whensoever they came to offer a sacrifice, in the old law, they were first purified; if any man were vncleane, and should offer a sacrifice, he was to be cut off from his people. Therefore, to sanctifie the L O R D in our hearts, is to come with holy hearts, as in the *I Tim. 2. 8.* it is the charge that the Apostle, giues there, *lift up pure hands without wrath or doubting;*

doubting; lif vp pure hearts, and innocent hands, without wrath, or doubting.

You will say vnto me, what is this holinesse?

Beloved, it is nothing but a sequestring, or separating any thing from a common vse, and appropriating it to G o d alone, that is holiness. You know, whatsoever was holy to the L o R D , in the Temple, or otherwise, whether it were holy vessels, or holy men, as the Priests, it was separated from all other vses, and made peculiar to him, and to his service. Now the heart of a man is holy then, when it is withdrawne from all things else, and peculiar to the L o R D alone. As a chaste wife is to her husband, whose affections are bestowed vpon him, and no other person else, so when the heart is to the L o R D alone, when all the affections are intent vpon him, and bestowed vpon him, and vpon none else, this is to have the heart wholly to him. So that now hee that will have an eye vpon credit, vpon vaine glory, vpon wealth, vpon his lusts, vpon any thing besides the L o R D , that the heart is wedded to it, that he bestowes any part of that conjugal affection vpon it, that shoulde be wholly the L o R D s, this man is an vnholie man, his heart is not holy: for it is not sequestred from other things, and consecrated to him alone: for that is to be holy.

And as the heart must be holy, so must the prayer be holy. When a man prayes to the L o R D with respect vnto him, and hath an eye vpon him, and nothing else comes in to take away part of this prayer; if by respect, and worldly, and carnall

*Ques<sup>t.</sup>.*

*Answ.*

Holines what.

I  
The heart must  
be holy.

*Simile.*

An vnholie man  
who.

2  
The prayer  
must be holy.

carnall thoughts come in, and set you on work to pray, now these haue a portion & interest in your prayers, they make your prayers profane & common, they are not peculiar to the L o r d, they are vnholy. So that is the holines then in seeking the L o r d, when we are knit, and wedded to him, when onctakes this resolution to himselfe, I am the L o r d s servant, and him will I serue, I am not the servant of man, nor of any creature, I am married to the L o r d, and his will I be alone, I will withdraw my heart from all things else. So likewise when a man prayes, so that his soule is intent vpon the L o r d, and vpon nothing besides, when the whole stremme of his affections are carried to him, this is to seeke to him in holinesse, this is to sanctifie the L o r d in our hearts.

Heb. 10.

<sup>3</sup>  
Particular sins  
must be repen-  
ted of.

And lastly, if there be any *conscience of sinne*, (that phrase I finde vsed in Heb. 10.) that is, if there be an evill conscience, if a man be conscientious to himselfe of any sinne that is vnapented of, such a man cannot pray, that makes him vnholy: if there be any sinfull lust yet living in him, that is, vnmortified in him, which is not washed away, such a man is vnholy: yea, my Beloved, the Saints themselues, when they sinne against G o d, as you heard heretofore, they are suspended from the Covenant; though they be within the Covenant, yet they are suspended from receiving the benefit by it, that otherwise they might haue: till that sinne be washed away, they are not holy. A Priest, or one that was holy, if he touched any vncleane thing, hee remained vnholy,

holy, till he was washed, though otherwise hee were holy habitually, wholly dedicated to G o d s service; so it may be with those, that are within the covenant, though thou be a holy man yet, if thou touch pitch, that is, if thy heart bee polluted with any sinne, of one kinde or other, as long as that remaines, thou art vnholy. If thou come now, and seeke to the L o r d , you know what the judgment was in the old law, such a one was to bee cut off from his people. And therefore, you shall finde, this was the constant practise of the Saints; when they sought the L o r d for any speciall mercy, they began with taking paines with their owne hearts, with humbling themselves for their owne sinnes, and the sinnes of the people: as we know, *Daniel* and *Ezra*, and *David*, in their prayers, ( I neede not stand to giue you instances ) and indeede so should wee alwayes, when we come with any request, and petition to the L o r d .

First, let a man examine his heart and his life diligently, looke backe to all his former wayes, consider and goe through all the particulars; see if there be any thing amisse, if there bee any tincture of vncleanness yet lying vpon him, that is not yet washed away, if there be any pollution, any defilement of flesh, or spirit, and let him know that it is bat labour lost, it is a provoking of the L o r d , to come as a man vnpreserved, to drawe neare to him, except he be cleanned.

But you will say, how shall we be clensed?

The practise of  
holy men in  
their prayers.

*Answe.*2. Meanes of  
cleansing a  
manselfe.

I

2

1 Cor. 6.9:

Conscience of  
sinne a great  
hindrance in  
our prayers.*Simile.*

Heb. 10. 22.

I answe, you are clesned by renewing your repentence, and sprinkling the blood of Christ: when a man humbles himselfe for his sinne, and entreth into covenant with G o d, not to returne vnto it, when hee makes his heart perfect, and sincere with the L o r d in that particular.

And secondly, when he shall withall beleue, that it is forgiven through Christ, when hee is sprinkled in his blood to wash it away: though thy sinne be great, yet this will make thee pure, now thou art washed, as it is in the 1 Cor. 6. 9.  
*Now you are washed, now you are sanctified, now you are iustified:* therefore let not a man bee discouraged in this case: for, I confess, there is nothing that giues such a checke to our prayers, that giues so many stabbs to them (as it were) that hinders vs in that duty, as the conscience of sinne, when a man remembers such and such a sinne he hath committed: yet be not discouraged; for the blood of I E S V S C H R I S T is able to wash them away. Though a mans face be very fowle, yet, you know, a basen of cleare water will wash it cleane, and all the filth is gone: now the blood of C H R I S T is more effectuall to rench thy conscience, and to purge it from dead workes, to take away, botli the guilt of sinne, and likewise the power, and staine of it. And therefore, if thou haue any sinne, labour to be washed from that, that then thou maist come to the L o r d, having thy heart sprinkled from an evill conscience, and thy body washed in pure water, as it is in *Heb. 10.22. Let us draw neere,* saith the Apostle,

in

*in assurance of faith:* but how? *having our hearts sprinkled from an evill conscience:* as if hee should say, otherwise your drawing neere will be to no purpose, you shall but provoke the Lord in drawing neere, except you be thus sprinkled, and thus washed, and thus purified.

I, but you will say to me, if this be required, who shall be heard in his prayers? for who can say his heart is pure, and his hands are innocent? and if this be required, that we must lift vp holy, and pure hearts, or else we shall not be accepted; what comfort shall we haue in calling vpon the Lord, at any time?

To this I answere, that to haue a pure heart, is not to be free from sin, and from daily failings, (for so indeede none should haue a pure heart) but purenesse of heart, holinesse of heart is, to haue *our hearts sprinkled from an evill conscience,* and to haue *our bodies washed w<sup>t</sup>h pure water,* that is, to be purified before the Lord, is nothing else, but to haue such an habituall disposition, which makes a man ready to wash himseife still, though he be still spotted with sinne. So that this is the disposition of a holy man; if a man that drawes neere to the Lord with a pure heart, though he be still spotted, and polluted, and defiled, yet hee hath an habituall disposition, he hath a principle within, hee hath a new nature within, that is still working out that impuritie, and washing it away; though still he bee opposed, and assaulted, and tempted, and sometimes foiled, yet still he resists it, and fightes against it;

Object.

*Answ.*  
What it is to  
haue a pure  
heart.

A holy heart  
neuer makes  
peace with sin.

Purity what.

Simile.

as the *Israelites* had a charge never to make peace with *Amaleck*; such a disposition is in such a man, he never makes peace with any sinne, though he be led captiue sometimes by it, yet he yeelds not to that captivity. This is to haue a pure heart, though his heart be defiled sometimes, as a vessell will be fowle, yet he washeth, and renfreteth his heart, he never suffers it to continue muddie, and vncleane, and in a filty disposition, but he hath a fountaine, a spring of grace within, that will worke out all impurity, as a spring workes out mudde: he that thus purifies himselfe still, though the fountaine be muddie, though there be many injections, many temptations, many lusts and sinnes, yet, if he be purified himselfe; that he will suffer no sinne to mingle with his heart (as it were) to rest there, and to abide, and dwell there, to lye, and continue there, such a man hath a pure heart. We say, that is pure, that is full of it selfe, and will haue no heterogeneitie, no other thing mingled with it, such a thing is pure, as pure oyle is nothing else but oyle. Now he that hath a pure heart, is not he that hath simply nothing else, that hath no sinne mingled, that hath no drosse mingled with his wine, but hee that suffers it not to rest there; but as oyle and water, when you jumble them together, (as you know, when they are shaken together, they mingle) yet the oyle workes out, and purifies it selfe, it will not suffer it selfe to abide with the water: a man, that is regenerate, a man that is borne of God, hath a seed remaining in him, though he doe fin,

sin, yet, saith the Apostle, *he cannot sinne*, that is, he doth not agree, hee doth not mingle with that sinne, it hath no rest in his heart, but he workes it out; in a passion when he is shaken (as it were) when he is transported, when he is not himselfe, there may be a mixture, and the fountaine, and the spring may be made muddy, yet let him come to himselfe, still he workes it out; that is to haue a pure heart. So that a man thus affected may come with boldnesse to the throne of grace, and not be discouraged; what though thy sinnes be many, and very great, and often repeated? yet, if thou finde in thy selfe such a disposition of purenesse and holinesse, still to clense thy selfe, though thou be still polluted and defiled, I can assure thee, thy heart is pure, thou maist goe with confidence to the throne of grace.

But now you wil say this to me, (for that may be objected) why? but may not any carnall man say as much, he sins against God, and comes and askes mercy, he comes and cries for forgiuenes, and saith he will sinne no more, and yet he sinnes againe the next day, and *addes drunkennesse to thirst*; that is, his sinne and his repentance they runne in a circle, as drunkennesse and thirst? how shall wee distinguish then betweene these two, that purifying disposition in the Saints, and those vanishing purposes that carnall men may haue, that never had experiance of the worke of grace, of that purity of heart that wee speake of?

To this I answeare briefly, you shall know the

K 3

*Answ.*

diffe-

*Obiect.*

Difference between the godly and others, in falling into sinne.

Sinne in a carnall man groweth stronger, in a godly man weaker.

A paradox in philosophy.

*Quest.*

*Answ.*

How sinne in a godly man is weakened by his faults.

difference by this, a godly man, when he falls into sinne, and is defiled with it, hee washeth himselfe from day to day: you shall find alwayes this, that he gets ground of the sinne, of the lust, that manifests it selfe in any actuall transgression, still it looseth by it, it gathers not strength, but looseth strength: in a carnall man it is quite contrary, his sinne still increaseth, and intends the habit, and the lust growes stronger and stronger, it gets ground of him, and those good things that he hath, they are more and more worne out, and so they grow worse and worse from day to day, and that is the property of an evill man, of vni-regeneracy wheresoever, it is apt to grow worse and worse, and the more falls they haue, the more sinne gets ground, and the more they lose; but it is not so with a holy man, the more hee falls, the more strength hee gathers, hee is the more holy by it, the more wary, and watchfull, and the more hee is emptied of himselfe, and drawes neerer to the L o r d , and is the more inflamed with loue him, hee is strengthened in faith, and repentance, and in every grace: so that here the rule now holds not true, that acts increase habits, but the contrary, acts lessen the habits, which is a paradox in philosophy, but here it is so.

If you aske how it can be?

I answere, in its owne nature every act intends the habit, as well in a godly man, as another man, but it comes to passe by accident, as wee say, because the grace in him is stirred vp, by those

those foiles, and flipps, and those falls, and infirmities, to whiel he is subiect : I say, grace is stirred vp in him more and more, and receiuers more vigour, and strength. As wee say of true valour, it is increased more by opposition; so it comes to passe, that the more the childe of God falls into sinne, the more grace is intended, Sathan gets lesse ground, as *Hezekiah*, when hee fell into pride, the pride of his heart was lessened more by it, then when he shewed his treasure to the Ambassadour of the King of *Babel*, he knew not before the pride of his heart, that sinne, that fall did manifest his corruption, which hee did not see before. So that, when the heart is sincere, when it is pure, when there is a right principle within, grace is set more on worke to resist sinne. So *David*, when he had numbred the people, that made him more humble, and therefore the Lord shewed him more mercy afterwards, then ever he did before, hee shewed him where the Temple should bee built, and vsed him in that worke, and never shewed him such mercie, and kindnesse before: (I cannot stand to expresse particulars) so it is with all the Saints; their hearts are never better, nor in more holy temper, nor more fearefull to offend, and in a more gracious disposition, then after their falls; and therefore consider that, that thou bee not deceived, that thou maist distinguish betweene this falling into sinne, and wassing your selues, and that relapse to which evill men are subiect; and keepe that for a rule, that wheresoever there is

Valour increased  
by opposi-  
tion.

The heart of  
the godly bee  
after falls.

*Note.*

true grace, still it stirres it selfe more and more, as it findes more resistance, even as the winde and the water, and the fire doth; you know, the water, when it findes a stop, it growes more violent, and so the winde; of the same nature is grace, where it findes a stop, and findes resistance, it growes more strong, and intent. The heathens had a little glimpse of this truth, when they said of vertue, that it growes more fresh and vigorous by being wounded; that is true of grace and holinelle, the true vertue, the more it is opposed, the more it growes: even as you see in oppositiōn in the disputes of schollers, and all kind of contentions in law, or any thing else; the stronger the objection is, where there is ability in the partie, it produceth new notions, and new answers, and puts them more to it; so these assaults and temptations, when there is truth of heart within, it drawes out more holinesse to **G o D**, and more strength, it multiplies the graces of **G o D** within: so that the graces receiue increase, the more they are exercised, and intended, and sinfull lusts decrease, the minde is more emptied forth; the chaffe that is in vs, and the drosse is more winnowed out, and the heart is more cleansed from it. So much shal serue for this, that who soever will come to the **L o R d** in prayer, must sanctifie him in his heart, that is, hee must come with a holy, and with a pure heart. We haue shewed what this holinesse, and purenesse is, wherein it consists, and likewise how the objection is answered, that might deceiue vs. So much for that property.

*Simile.*

Vertue gets  
strength by  
wounds.

*Simile.*

I must adde another, you shall find it *Phil. 4.6.* whensoever you come to make your requests to the L O R D , this is another condition that he requires, to be thankfull for the mercies you haue received already : *in all things*, faith hee , *let your requests bee made knowne to the Lord, with thanksgiving*: as if he should say, take heede of this, that whensoever you come to put vp any petition to the L O R D , you forget not the duty of thankfulness, but still when you come to aske any thing that you want, remember that you giue thankes for that you haue. Beloved, this condition must not be omitted: you see the *Lord* himselfe puts it in very carefully, *let your requests bee made knowne with prayer, and supplication, and with thanksgiving*. There is much reason why our petitions, and requests should be accompanied with thanksgiving to the L O R D : for is it not reason when you come to aske somewhat for your selues, that you should doe that also that is acceptable to G o d : will a man serue himselfe altogether, to come merely to aske the thing he wants ? this a man may doe out of loue to himselfe, out of respect to himselfe ; but you must remember to doe something that is pleasing and acceptable to the L O R D . And therefore you shall finde in the old law, they were commanded still to come with peace offerings, that is, offerings, wherein they expressed thankfulness, whensoever they had any speciall request to the L O R D , you shall find that was the manner in *Levit.* and other places, that such a man as came to request any thing,

<sup>6</sup> Condition required in prayer, is Thankfulness, Phil:4.6.

Note.

All mercies reduced to peace.

If we look only  
on our wants,  
wee cannot be  
thankfull.

*Simile.*

thing at the L o r d s hands, might not come empty handed; and what should he bring with him? a peace offering: what was that? thankfulnesse for that peace he had enjoyed, that was a peace offering; for peace is a generall word comprehending all kinde of mercies. For what is our health, but the peace of our humours within? what is our cheerefulness, and joy, but the peace of conscience within? all the comfort wee haue in our name, and state, it is peace in the particular, &c. So I say, whensoeuer thou commest with a petition, forget not to come with a peace offering, that is, forget not to come with thanksgiving to the L o r d , for that which thou hast received, doe somewhat that is acceptable to him, as well as seeke for that which is vsefull for thy selfe. Beloved, there is much reason for it; because, if a man be poring on his wants still, if it be in his mind, when he comes to call vpon G o d it will indispose him for spirituall performance, it will beget murmuring, and sowrenesse, and discontent, it will imbitter his spirit: when a man remembers many mercies that he hath received, when he makes a catalogue of them, and enumerates them, it sweetens his spirit, it makes him more gracious, it acts those graces that are in him, it drawes him nearer to the L o r d , it quickens him, it makes him more contented with his condition that he is in: whereas, on the other side, forgetfulness of mercies, when a man is onely intent vpon his petition to haue the thing done, he breakes many times into that sullennesse of disposition,

disposition, that we finde in children, that, when they cannot haue al that they would, they throw away that which they haue; so that is our fault many times, when wee come and seeke to the L O R D for any thing that we need, we are so intent vpon that, that we forget all the mercies we haue received, as if they were nothing: the L O R D would not haue it so, but will haue vs remember what wee receiuie, that wee may be content to want, that our hearts may be brought to patience, and contentment, vnder the crosse, and to want what it shall please him, for a time, to deny vs, as Job reasoneth, saith hee, *I have received good from the Lords hands, (it is his answer to his wife) and shall I not receive ill? so, if a good man bee thankfull for mercies, it will make him ready to doe so, it will make him content with that present want: for he lookest to that which he hath had in hand.* When a man saith thus with himselfe, thus, and thus much good I haue received at the L O R D s hands, what though I want such a thing? what though I be prest with such an affliction, and calamity? I will be content to beare it, I say, the L O R D lookest for this, expostulating with him, and murmuring against him, is not a meeke manner of asking things at his hands, but when a man so askes, that withall he is content to be denied, if his good pleasure be so. Now, thankfulnesse for mercy, makes vs ready to be so affected, to be willing to be denied, to be content to refigne our selues to the L O R D , & therefore he will haue thankfulnesse to goe with it,

when-

The sight of  
some good re-  
ceived will  
make vs con-  
tent to want.

whensoever wee come to aske any things at his hands. And therefore obserue, that whensoever you come so secke the L o r d , you be thankfull for the mercies you haue had, remember them ; for it is a great meanes to prevaile in our requests. Thankfulnesse is (as it were) the incense, that perfumes your petitions, that makes them acceptable, and prevalent with the L o r d , so much the sooner. Prayer goes vp without incense, when wee offer vp our petitions without thankfulnesse ; because that is a sacrifice, as you know it is called the *values of our lips*, and ever when you joyne thankfulnesse with your petitiones, it is like a sacrifice mingled w<sup>th</sup> it, that helpes to prevaile for you.

7 Condition required in prayer, is, to come in the name of the Lord Iesus Christ.

Iam. 4.

The next condition is, and it must not be forgotten, of all the rest, that we come to the *Lord, in the name of Iesus Christ*. This is a thing com-monly knowne, you will say, who knowes not that, except we come in the name of Christ, no petition can be acceptable ? Beloved, I say to you in that case, as the Apostle *James* speaks, *Iam. 4.* where he giues this rule, that we should say, *if the Lord will we will doe such and such a thing to morrow, &c.* and when the answere would be ready, who knowes not this ? saith hee, if you know the will of the L o r d , and doe it not, your judgement shall be greater ; so I say, if any doe not practise this, ( and it is a thing we are exceeding ready to forget, or wee are ready to doe it in a formall, and in a customary manner, but to doe it in good earnest, as wee ought to doe it, therein

therein commonly wee come short) you know how great a sinne it was , in the olde law, to offer without a Priest ; in the 17 of *Leviticus* it is said there , if any man brought his sacrifice, though it were the best sacrifice and the choise, yet, faith the text, *if he did not bring it to the priest, and to the Altar, but stay his sacrifice else where, without a Priest, such a man was guilty of blood, and was to be cut off from his people*; that is , hee was to be cut off by the Priest, by excommunication , and after by the civill Magistrate. You know, it was *Vzziah's* fault to offer incense, when it was proper to the Priest to doe it ? The same sinne we commit when we come to the L O R D , and thinke , because wee haue repented , and prayed fervently , because wee thinke , our hearts and spirits are in a good disposition , because we know no sinne , of which wee are con-sciouſ , for this cause wee thinke that wee shall bee heard. It is true : the L O R D requires these qualifications , in the partie , when hee prayes; but take heede of thinking to bee heard for this, this is to offer without a Priest. You must come thus to the L O R D , and say vnto him, L O R D , I confesse ( notwithstanding all this ) I am vnworthy , I haue nothing in me, why thou shouldest regard mee , it cannot be , that either I , or my prayer should be acceptable , but I be-seech thee, take them at the hands of C H R I S T , our *High Priest*, hee that is *entred into the vaile*, he, that takes the *prayers of the Saints*, and *mingles them with sweete odours*; when a man can really doe

Levit. 17.

In what manner to come to God.

Levit. 5. 11.

Our prayers  
are not heard  
for any excellency  
in them,  
but for Christ.

doe this , with dependance vpon Christ , and come boldly in his name, that is to offer a sacrifice to him ; and this we must carefully remember; and therefore we see an excellent expression of this iu *Levit. 5.* where this is made cleare to you, that it is not any excellency in the person, not any fervency in the prayer , not any purenesse, or holinesse that is found in him , nothing that comes from man , that causeth his prayer to be acceptable, but it is the Priest,in that place from vers. 8. to the 11. you shall finde there the law was, that he that came to sacrifice, *must bring a sheepe, or a shee goat*, but if hee were not so rich as to do so, he was able enough to bring *two turtle Dones*; yet if he were not able to do that, then, saith the text, *he shall bring the tenth part of an Epha of fine flowre*, (a very small thing) and, saith he, *let him giue it to the Priest, and he shall make an atonement for him, and his sin shall be forgiven.* Whence I obserue this, that it is not the goodnessse of the sacrifice, the price, nor the choisenesse nor the excellency of that, when they came with a thousand Rammes , and so many sheepe, and bullocks,(as you reade of many great sacrifices, that were offred by the Kings) yet the tenth part of an epha of fine flower , which was exceeding little , this prevailed fully as much; it shewes evidently , that it is not in the sacrifice, but the poorest, and the smallesst, and the meanest sacrifice will prevaile with God , as well as the richest, and the greatest. What is the reason ? For, saith he , it is the Priest , that must offer it , he makes

makes it acceptable ; so in this case, let the sacrifice be never so meane , yet if it be Christ , that offers the sacrifice , if it bee commended to the priest , and he offers it , the L O R D will accept it . You shal find that rule , *Levit. 5. 11.* *He that brings a sacrifice , ( this caution was given ) he must put no incense to it , neither oyle .* But should the sacrifice be offered without incense ? No , you shall find in *Levit. 16.* that alwayes , *the Priest* when he entred into the *holie of holiest* , hee burnt incense , that they *cloud of that incense , migh cover the Mercy seat :* the meaning is this , that when any man comes to offer a prayer to the L O R D , he can put no incense to it , the priest only he must put in incense , that is , *I E S U S C H R I S T* only must offer the sacrifice , wherein the L O R D smells a favour of rest : for the L O R D expresseth himselfe in this manner , as if he were disquieted for sinne , and can take no rest ; now , when *I esus Christ* offers a sacrifice , he smells a favour of rest ; because it comes from him , in whom he is well pleased : so , I say , wee must be carefull , that we remember we come in the name of Christ .

But , you will say , every man doth so , and how shall we know it ?

You shall know it by this , if you haue boldnesse , and confidence , that is an argument that you looke not vpon your selues , but vpon Christ When a man is so exceeding timerous , and doubting , and fearefull , that he dares not come to the throne of grace , or , if hee doe , yet hee makes a great question , whether he shall be heard

or

*Levit. 5. 11.*

*Levit. 16. 12, 13*  
Christ must  
put incense to  
our prayes .

*Object.*

*Answe.*  
How to know  
when we come  
in our owne  
names in pray-  
er .

What is vred  
in the heart  
thar comes to  
God in Christ's  
name.

Heb. 9.

Object.

Answe.

Two thinges re-  
quired in our  
sacrifice.

or no, this is too much looking to himselfe, here the high priest is forgotten. If thou come in his name, there is enough to carry thee out, it will breede boldnesse in thee, it will breede confidence: if thou come in the name of Christ, and offer vp thy prayers through him, it will cause thee, in every petition thou puttest vp, to think thy selfe so much beholding to Christ, that thou wilt be ready to say, in thy heart, whensoever any petition is granted thee, I may thanke *Iesus Christ* for this. When a man, I say, shall bee so much put vpon his score, it will make him so much indebted to the L o r d *Iesus* for his sinne that is remitted, and this Petition that hee hath granted, that his heart shall be more inlarged to thankfulness, when he is able to consider the benefit of redemption, and is ready to say with himselfe, if *Iesus Christ* had not dyed, if I had not had such an high Priest, that hath entred into the very heavens, as the Apostle saith *Heb. 9. to make intercession for me*, I had lost this benefit, I had never come to haue put vp a praier to the L o r d, or, if I had, it should not haue been heard.

But you will say to mee, if wee be heard for Christ; then though a man be sinful and though hee haue none of the precedent conditions; though he haue not that holiness that is required, if the Priest make him acceptable, why may he not hope as well as the most holy man?

I answer, briefly, though the Priest giue all acceptance to the sacrifice, and our prayers are accepted through him, yet that is not all, there are

are two things besides required, that the person that brings the sacrifice, be cleane ; no impure person was to bring a sacrifice: secondly, that the sacrifice be without blemish, he that hath a male, and brings a female, is cursed : So this is required, that the person be *righteous*, and that the *prayer* be *fervent*, such as is indited by the helpe of G o d's spirit, that it may be a sacrifice fit for the L o r d . But now, that we haue from Christ, is this, that though the person be so, and the prayer thus qualifid, and haue those forenoted conditions in it, yet it is not acceptable, without the Priest. And therefore this should incourage you, when you consider the glorious G o d , his holinesse, that great distance betweene him and you, and your selues, on the other side, how vile and sinfull you are, and vnfit to come and put vp your requests to him ; now, when you thinke of a Mediator, of an high Priest, who is entred into heaven, who is gone thither, and sits at the right hand of Majestie, making intercession for you, when you consider there is one high Priest, who is able to prevaile, not like the Priests in the law, but one that is over the house of G o d , one that is the very son, that is not entred in through the blood of Bulls, and Goates, but with his owne blood ; when out of this you shall receiue confidence, and come neare him with boldnesse, this is to make vse of Christ, and to offer sacrifice in him. There is no more remaining now, but that when you haue considered all the conditions mentioned, and fitted your prayers according

The person  
must be holy,  
and the prayer  
fervent.

How to make  
vse of Christ as  
our Priest.

Waiting in  
prayer requi-  
red.

*Simile.*

Instances of  
being over ha-  
stily after prayer

ding to them, that you be confident, and expect much, that when you haue prayed, you may say thus, L o r d , I expect now the granting of them, thou canst not now deny them, L o r d , I will wait now. And this is our fault; when we haue prayed, and the thing comes not presently, wee are ready to give over, we are not willing to waite. Beloved, that is one thing specially to bee remembred, we must so farremagnify our prayers, wee must set a price vpon them so farre, and so esteeeme them, and thinke them of that worth, that they will bring the thing to passe. If a man take a drugg, or a medicine, or an herbe, and vse it to a wound, or a disease, once, or twice, or thrice, and, if he see it doth no good, he will lay it aside, and take another medicine: for, saith he, I haue tryed it, and it will doe me no good; so a man doth with his prayers, he saith, I haue sought to the L o r d , I haue prayed for this thing twice, or thrice, and it is not granted me; and therefore he is ready to lay it aside, as if it were not effectuall, and to take another meanes; this neglect of prayer is not to know the force of the medicine. You must know therefore of what efficacie prayer is, and trust it, and not give over, (for it is effectuall to bring the thing to passe) and not make hast, but stay, and waite, it was Sarahs fault, when Abraham and shee sought to the L o r d for a sonne, she made too much hast to giue Hagar to Abraham, when they should haue stayed till the L o r d had done it his owne way. So Rebeccah, there was a promise, and no doubt,

Jacob,

*Jacob*, and shee prayed for the fulfilling of that promise, but she made too much haste, she tooke a wrong way to get the blessing by lying, this was not waiting, but a stepping out to another meanes; because they thought prayer and dependance vpon G o d would not doe it. So *Saul* would not waite vpon G o d, but he would offer sacrifice, this was to make hast. And so it is, when a man is discouraged; *David*, when the thing was not presently granted, he was ready to give over, and falls to a desperate complaint, saying, *one day I shall fall by the hands of Saul*. Take heede of this, and when we offer our prayers thus, learne to know what they are, learne to trust them, and to depenid, and waite vpon G o d, say certainly, I shall not be denied, the thing shall surely be granted.

So much for this time, and this text.

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FINIS

---

23 vii

# THE CONTENTS OF THE ENSVING TREATISE.

Pag.

<b>T</b> HE words opened, where-		wayes.
in are 3 things.	2	
1. What prayer is.	Ibid.	Object. that God is not changed by our endeavours.
2. Why the Lord will have us pray, for 7 reasons.	11	44
3. What it is to pray continu-	15	Object. wicked men enjoy blef-
ally.		sings without prayer; answere-
Prayer twice a day, the grounds	16	red 3 wayes.
of it.		46
Wicked men their misery.	18	Object. that the godly pray and speed not, and the reasons.
Motives to prayer 8.	19	50
Objections against prayer.		When wee pray to spend on our lusts.
Object. against time spent in		52
prayer, answered 3 wayes.	32	God grants not our prayers in our manner.
Object. against prayer in respect		54
of unfitnessse, answered 2		Nor by our meanes.
wayes.	34	56
Object. concerning difficulties		Nor in our time.
to pray, 7 mentioned, and their		59
remedies.	36.39	God defers to grant our requests
Object. against prayer, God		for 4 reasons.
knowes our wants.	41	64
Object. from Gods purpose to be-		6. Dangers in neglecting pray-
stow things, answered 2		er.
		70
		9 Cases of conscience concerning
		prayer.
		71
		1 Case about wandering thoughts,
		4 causes of them.
		72
		2 Case concerning dulnesse with
		the causes of it.
		74.75.
		3 Case of praying after some
		* * great

## THE CONTENTS.

great sinne, 3 reasons for it.	76	7 Conditions or qualifica- tions in prayer.
4 Case concerning a set forme of prayer.	80	1 Condition, the person must be right. 102
5 Case concerning voice, and ge- sture in prayer.	84	2 Condition is faith, and what faith is required. 105.106
6 Case of straitnesse of time, 5 cautions in it.	88.90	3 Condition fervencie, with cau- tions concerning it. 115
7 Case for use of meanes, 4 rea- sons of it.	92	4 Condition humility, 4 reasons of it. 122
3 Cautions in using meanes.	94	5 Condition holinesse, in 3 things
8 Case concerning praying in faith.	98	126
9 Case of knowing whether our prayers be heard or not.	100	6 Condition thankfulness. 137
		7 Condition, to come to God in the name of Christ. 140

THE

## THE TABLE.

A.		B.	C.
<i>Acceptable.</i>	<i>Fol.</i>	<i>Blessings</i> enjoyed without prayer unceas-	
<b>N</b> O natural man can make a prayer. acceptable to God.	9	taine,	47
<i>Acquaintance.</i>		<i>Blessings</i> bestowed from love and provi-	
<i>Acquaintance</i> , how it is gotten and lost	14	dence different,	Ibid.
<i>Amisse.</i>		<i>Blessings</i> God desires to heare us to teach	
We pray amisse in three respects.	50	us to use them.	65
<i>Angels.</i>		<i>Businesse.</i>	
<i>Angels</i> how they speake to God and one		<i>Businesse</i> over much hinders time from	
another.	85	prayer.	91
<i>Arguments.</i>		<i>Businesse</i> , we must not be too intent upon	
<i>Arguments</i> in prayer of whatuse.	45	it,	Ibid.
<i>Arguments</i> in prayer strengthen our faith	112		
<i>Argumentes</i> used by the Saints of old.	121	<i>C.</i>	
<i>Armour.</i>		<i>Care.</i>	
Prayer teacheth to use the rest of our spi-		Worldly care hinders from prayer.	038
rituall armour.	23	<i>Care</i> in prayer required.	54
<i>Attributes.</i>		<i>Carnall.</i>	
<i>Attributes</i> of God acknowledged in pray-		A holy man may make a carnall prayer.	9
er.	108.	Our hearts being carnall are loath to	
<i>Attributes</i> of two sorts.	Ibid.	come to God in prayer.	37
<i>B.</i>		<i>Care.</i>	
<i>Benefit.</i>		Nine cases of conscience touching prayer	71
Prayer the benefit of it.	21		
<i>Blessings.</i>		<i>Change.</i>	
<i>Blessings</i> bestowed upon condition wee		Prayer change not God but us.	44
pray.	42	<i>Christ.</i>	
		A man must have Christ before God give	
		him any thing else.	102
		Our prayers must bee offered through	
		Christ.	140
		Our prayers granted for Christ.	142
		What required of us to come to God in	
		Christ.	144
		<i>M</i>	
		<i>Church.</i>	

# THE TABLE.

<i>Church.</i>	
God bestowes things on wicked men for the good of the church.	48
<i>Cleanse.</i>	
Meanes to cleanse a mans selfe.	130
<i>Command.</i>	
It is Gods command wee should pray.	19. 77
<i>Communion.</i>	
Communion with God maintained by prayer.	13
<i>Conscience.</i>	
Conscience, the breaches of it made up by prayer.	78
Conscience of sinne hinders prayer.	130
<i>Condition.</i>	
Conditions or qualifications of prayer.	7. 102
<i>Continuall, Continuall.</i>	
Continually to pray what.	15
Continually praying the benefit of it.	71
Continuall in prayer required.	113
Continuall praying a note of fervencie.	118
<i>Costly.</i>	
Wee should make our services to God costly.	33
<i>Covenant.</i>	
Covenant generall before the particular.	102
 <b>D:</b>	
<i>Danger.</i>	
Dangers in omitting prayer.	6. 70
<i>Deferre.</i>	
God defers to answer us many times.	60
God defers to answer us for 4 reasons	64
<i>Delay.</i>	
Delays must not bee taken for denials from God.	60
<i>Desire.</i>	
Desires, vwhen they be good.	4
Desires must be offered to God.	6
Desires good whence they must rise.	Ibid.
Desires not good vwithout use of meaneas.	92
See outward, see naturall.	
<i>Dyed.</i>	
The end vwhy Christ dyed.	19
<i>Disadvantage.</i>	
Disadvantage that comes by omission of prayer.	27
<i>Dulnesse.</i>	
Dulnesse to prayer two causes of it.	
	75
 <b>E:</b>	
<i>Equity.</i>	
Equity in performing the duty of prayer.	
	20
<i>Exalt.</i>	
Who they be that God exalts.	122
<i>Example.</i>	
Example of the Saints a motive to prayer.	
<i>Excellency.</i>	
Excellency of man vwhat.	20
	33
 <b>F:</b>	
<i>Faith.</i>	
Faith in Gods povver and providence, the want of it hinders to prayer.	38
Faith tryed by Gods deferring to grant our prayers.	64
Of praying in faith, vwhen vvee vwant a particular promise.	98
Faith required in prayer what.	99. 105
Faith required in prayer, why.	106
	Faith

# THE TABLE.

Faith twofold.	1bid.	<i>God.</i>
How to know wee pray in <i>faith</i> .	113	God, what moves him to doe us good and evill.
<i>Faith</i> , fervency a fruit of it.	119	54
<i>Faithfulnesse.</i>		<i>Glory.</i>
<i>Faithfulnesse</i> of God strengthens faith in prayer.	111	<i>Glory</i> , what.
<i>Fall.</i>		<i>Glory</i> of God strengtheneth faith in pray- er.
Men of greater grace may fall.	67	12
<i>Falls</i> of the godly and others differ.	134	<i>Grace.</i>
<i>Falls</i> of the godly weaken sinne.	Ibid.	<i>Grace</i> may be prayed for by a carnall man.
The hearts of Saints best after <i>falls</i> .	135	5
<i>Fervency.</i>		<i>Grace</i> increased and exercised by prayer.
<i>Fervency</i> required in prayer.	115	13
<i>Fervency</i> why requisite.	116	<i>Grace</i> growes by exercise.
When a man is said to bee <i>servent</i> .	117	35
Cautions about <i>fervency</i> .	118	<i>Grace</i> , why men decline in it.
<i>Fervency</i> , whence it springs.	119	70
<i>Fit.</i>		<i>Grace</i> given to the humble.
The best way to fit us to prayer.	34	123
Staying for fitness after sinne commit- ted wee are more unfit.	79	Who receive all of free <i>grace</i> .
<i>Forme.</i>		125
Concerning praying after a set <i>forme</i> .	80	<i>See Fall.</i>
Obiectioners against a set <i>forme</i> , doe the same thing.	81	<i>Greater.</i>
A set <i>forme</i> of prayer, though it may be used, yet it is not sufficient for 5 rea- sons.	83	Prayer a greater matter than worldly busi- ness.
<i>Friends.</i>		32. 89
How to know that God and wee are <i>friends</i> .	35	<i>H.</i>
<i>G.</i>		<i>Heard.</i>
<i>Gefture.</i>		How to know when our prayers are heard.
<i>Gefture</i> used in prayer.	85	100
<i>Gifts.</i>		<i>Heart.</i>
Prayer acknowledgeth Gods <i>gifts</i> .	33	Heart is not bettered by customary pray- er.
<i>Hindrance.</i>		30
Time spent in prayer is no <i>hindrance</i> .	32	Heart enlarged.
<i>Holinessse.</i>		101
<i>Holinessse</i> required in prayer.	126	Heart must be cleansed when wee pray.
<i>Holinessse</i> what.	127	105
<i>Hypocrisie.</i>		Hearts must be holy in prayer.
<i>Hypocrisie</i> what.	31	127
<i>Hindrance.</i>		Hearts pure what.
Time spent in prayer is no <i>hindrance</i> .	32	131
<i>Holinessse.</i>		<i>Hypocrisie.</i>
<i>Holinessse</i> required in prayer.	126	31
<i>Holinessse</i> what.	127	<i>Hindrance.</i>
<i>M</i> . 2		Time spent in prayer is no <i>hindrance</i> .
<i>Honour.</i>		32

# THE TABLE.

<i>Honour.</i>	<i>L.</i>
<i>Honour</i> that God hath by prayer.      13	<i>Little.</i>
<i>Humble, Humiliation.</i>	
God deferres to grant our requests to bumble us.      64	A little measure may serve as well as greater.      66
The saints begin their prayers with hu- miliation, why.      104	Faithfulnesse in little.      69
<i>Humility</i> requisite in prayer.      122	<i>Love.</i>
	<i>Love</i> of Christ will make us pray to him.      24
<i>I.</i>	<i>Lusts.</i>
<i>Idlenesse.</i>	
<i>Idlenesse</i> what.      15	<i>Lusts</i> when we pray to satififie them.      51
<i>Image.</i>	When the naturall affection becomes a
<i>Image</i> of God increased by prayer.      33	<i>Lust.</i> 53
<i>Impediments.</i>	How to know we pray for our <i>lusts</i> . <i>Ibid.</i>
<i>Impediments</i> to prayer 7.      36	
Remedy against <i>impediments</i> .      39	<i>Luther.</i> 35
<i>Incense.</i>	
Christ puts <i>incense</i> to our prayers.      143	<i>Manner.</i>
<i>Indisposition.</i>	
<i>Indisposition</i> to prayer.      40. 74	<i>Manner</i> of desiring things.      4
<i>Indisposition</i> a motiveto prayer.      75	God grants not prayers in our <i>manner</i> .      54
<i>Indisposition</i> when it hinders not.      76	<i>Manner</i> of comming to God.      141
<i>Infirmities.</i>	<i>Means.</i>
<i>Infirmities</i> how the spirit helpers them.      10	God effects not things by our <i>means</i> .      56. 98.
<i>Inward.</i>	<i>Means</i> , wee give too much to them.      58.
<i>Inward</i> man disadvantaged by neglecting prayer.      28	<i>Means</i> , the use of them.      92
<i>Inward</i> distemper whence it is.      29	<i>Means</i> must be used for 4.reasons.      93
<i>Joy.</i>	Wee pray to have things in use of <i>means</i> .      94
<i>Joy</i> comes by prayer.      22	Prayer not the only <i>means</i> . <i>Ibid.</i>
<i>Injustice.</i>	<i>Means</i> , three Cautions in using them.      95
<i>Injustice</i> of God strengtheneth faith in pray- er.      109	When we pray in faith we are diligent in the use of <i>means</i> .      114
<i>K.</i>	<i>Measure.</i>
<i>Key.</i>	
Prayer the <i>key</i> that unlocks Gods trea- sures.      21	<i>Measure</i> in granting our prayers.      65
	A lesse <i>measure</i> of grace may serve as well as greater.      66
	<i>Mercy.</i>
	<i>Mercy</i> of God strengtheneth faith in pray- er.      109
	<i>Misery.</i>

# THE TABLE.

<i>Misery.</i>			
The misery of wicked men.	18	pray.	
<i>Mistake.</i>			
If our prayers be not granted wee <i>mistake</i> in them.	100	A holy man never at <i>peace</i> with sinne.	104
<i>N.</i>		All mercies reduced to <i>peace</i> .	112
<i>Name.</i>		<i>Person.</i>	138
Prayer must bee offered in Christ's <i>name</i> , and why.	10. 11	Person accepted.	102 145
How to know when wee come to God in our owne <i>name</i> .	143	<i>See Sinne.</i>	
<i>Naturall.</i>		<i>Poure.</i>	
Naturall desires not excluded in prayer.	51	To <i>poure</i> out the soule what.	8
<i>Neglect.</i>		<i>Power.</i>	
Neglect the cause of wandring thoughts.	73	Power of God strengthneth faith in pray- er.	110
Prayer must not bee neglected after great sinne.	77	<i>Practise.</i>	
<i>O.</i>		Practise of holy mea in their prayers.	129
<i>Objections.</i>		<i>Prayer.</i>	
Objections, the removing of them helps to prayer.	40	Prayer what.	2
Objections against prayer 4.	41	Prayer of 2. sorts.	3
<i>Occasions.</i>		Prayer of wicked men howlings. Ibid.	
Occurrences, the variety of them hinder from prayer.	37	Prayer how expressed in Scripture.	6
<i>Outward.</i>		Prayer right what.	9
Outward things when the desire of them is good.	5	Prayer, & motives to it.	19
Outward man disadvantaged by neglect of prayer.	28	Prayer prevalent.	22
Outward things enioyed without prayer.	47	Prayer formall as good as none.	29
<i>P.</i>		Prayer when it is rightly performed.	30
<i>Particular.</i>		Prayer what we must doe in it.	31. 115
How farre we must beleive the granting particular requests.	99	Prayer vwhat makes men slight it,	36
Particular sins must be removed when we		Prayers vwhich are best.	45
		Prayers faithfull not lost.	71
		Prayer vvhy used.	84
		Prayer vvhen granted and vwhen not.	101
		<i>Priest.</i>	
		How to make use of Christ as a <i>Priest</i> .	145
		<i>Presence.</i>	
		Wee are loath to come into Gods <i>presence</i> , and why.	37
		<i>Pride.</i>	
		The heart must be purged from <i>pride</i> in our prayers.	105
		<i>Promises.</i>	
		Faith in Gods <i>promises</i> required in prayer.	107
		<i>Provi-</i>	

# THE TABLE.

<i>Providence.</i>			
Want of faith in Gods providence hindreth prayer,	38	<i>Sinne,</i> how we must be disposed to it. 80	
Providencie of God may be crossed by our Prayers.	61	Sinnes cry louder than our prayers till our persons beright. 103	
Faith in Gods providence requisite in prayer.	107	Sinnes particular must be removed when we pray. 104	
<i>Purity.</i>		Sinne, the conscience of it hinderer prayer. 130	
<i>Purity what.</i>	132	<i>Sincerity.</i>	
<i>See Heart.</i>		<i>Sincerity in prayer.</i>	120
<i>Q.</i>		<i>Spira.</i>	
<i>Quiet.</i>		<i>Spira his case.</i>	6
When we pray in faith the minde is quiet.	113	<i>Spirit.</i>	
		To serve God in Spirit what. 7	
		Spirit not straitned in a set forme of prayer. 82	
<i>R.</i>		<i>See Infirmitie.</i>	
<i>Regenerate.</i>		<i>Strength.</i>	
Two things in a regenerate man.	9	We cannot fit our selves to prayer by our owne strength. 36	
Regenerate part apt to prayer.	Ibid.		
<i>Repent.</i>		<i>T.</i>	
Repentance of particular sinnes when we pray.	128	<i>Temptation.</i>	
		<i>Temptation, a cause of wandering thoughts.</i>	73
<i>S.</i>		<i>Thankfulness.</i>	
<i>Sacrifice.</i>		God requires prayer, that wee might be thankfull. 14	
Humility an acceptable sacrifice.	324	Thankfulness requisite in prayer. 137	
Sacrifice, what required in it.	144	What hinders thankfulness. 138	
<i>Safetie.</i>		<i>Thoughts.</i>	
<i>Safety,</i> wherein it consists.	23	Case of conscience about vvandering thoughts. 72	
<i>Sathan.</i>		Thoughts vvandering in prayer & causes of them. Ibid.	
<i>Sathan</i> hinders prayer.	39	Vaine thoughts admitted cause vvandering in prayer. 73	
<i>Short.</i>		Thoughts vvandering, how to prevent them. 74	
5. Cautions about shortnesse of prayer.	90	<i>Time.</i>	
<i>Sinne.</i>		Times of prayer, twice a day at the least. 16	
Sinnes committed hinder from prayer.	39	<i>Objection</i>	
Sinnes committed must not make us neglect prayer, and why.	76. 77		
Sinnes increase if we recover not soone out of them.	78		

# THE TABLE.

Obiection touching <i>time</i> spent in prayer.	<i>Voyce</i> , why used in prayer.	86
God grants not prayers in our <i>time</i> .	32	
Of straitning in <i>time</i> of prayer.	59	
<i>Time</i> should be allovved for prayer.	88	
<i>Time</i> husbanded vwell for prayer.	89	
<i>Trust</i> .	90	
Wee trust not God, if wee use not meaneſ.	93	
Wee are readier to <i>trust</i> men than God.	98	
<b>V.</b>		
<i>Valour.</i>		
True <i>valour</i> how increased.	135	
<i>Vnchangeable.</i>		
<i>Vnchangeableness</i> of God strengtheneth faith in prayer	110	
<i>Vnfittesse.</i>		
Obiections against prayer in regard of <i>unfittesse</i> .	34	
<i>Vnholy.</i>		
<i>Vnholy</i> man who.	127	
<i>Vnregenerate.</i>		
<i>Vnregenerate</i> men may frame prayers as well as others.	103	
<i>Vnthankfulnesse.</i>		
<i>Vnthankfulnesse</i> the heart must be purged from.	105	
<i>Voyce.</i>		
<i>Voyce</i> used in prayer.	84	
<b>W.</b>		
<i>Wandering</i> , see <i>Thoughts</i> .		
<i>Wants.</i>		
Wee must pray though God know our <i>wants</i> , and why.	11. 41	
Wee must not alway looke on our <i>wants</i> .		
<i>Hovv</i> to be content to want.	138	
<i>Waiting.</i>		
<i>Waiting</i> required in prayer.	146	
<i>Weaknesse.</i>		
<i>weaknesse</i> cause of <i>vandering</i> in prayer.		
Sinne <i>weaknesse</i> in a godly man, and <i>hovv</i> .	72	
<i>Will, Willing.</i>		
<i>will</i> accepted for the deed when.	34	
We doubt more whether God be <i>willing</i> , than able.	108	
<i>Worſhip.</i>		
Prayer required that we may <i>worſhip</i> God		
To <i>worſhip</i> God what.	42	
<i>Wound.</i>	Ibid.	
Virtue gets strength by <i>wounds</i> .	136	
<i>Wrath.</i>		
The heart must be cleansed from <i>wrath</i> in prayer.	105	

F I N I S.